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THOUGHTFUL MOMENTS.



THOUGHTFUL MOMENTS

BY

ONE OF THE PEOPLE.

“ Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.”

ST. PAUL.



LONDON :
SAUNDERS, OTLEY, AND CO.,
66, BROOK STREET, W.

1865.

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141. f. 4.

Nassau Steam Press—W. S. Johnson, 60, St. Martin's Lane, W.C.



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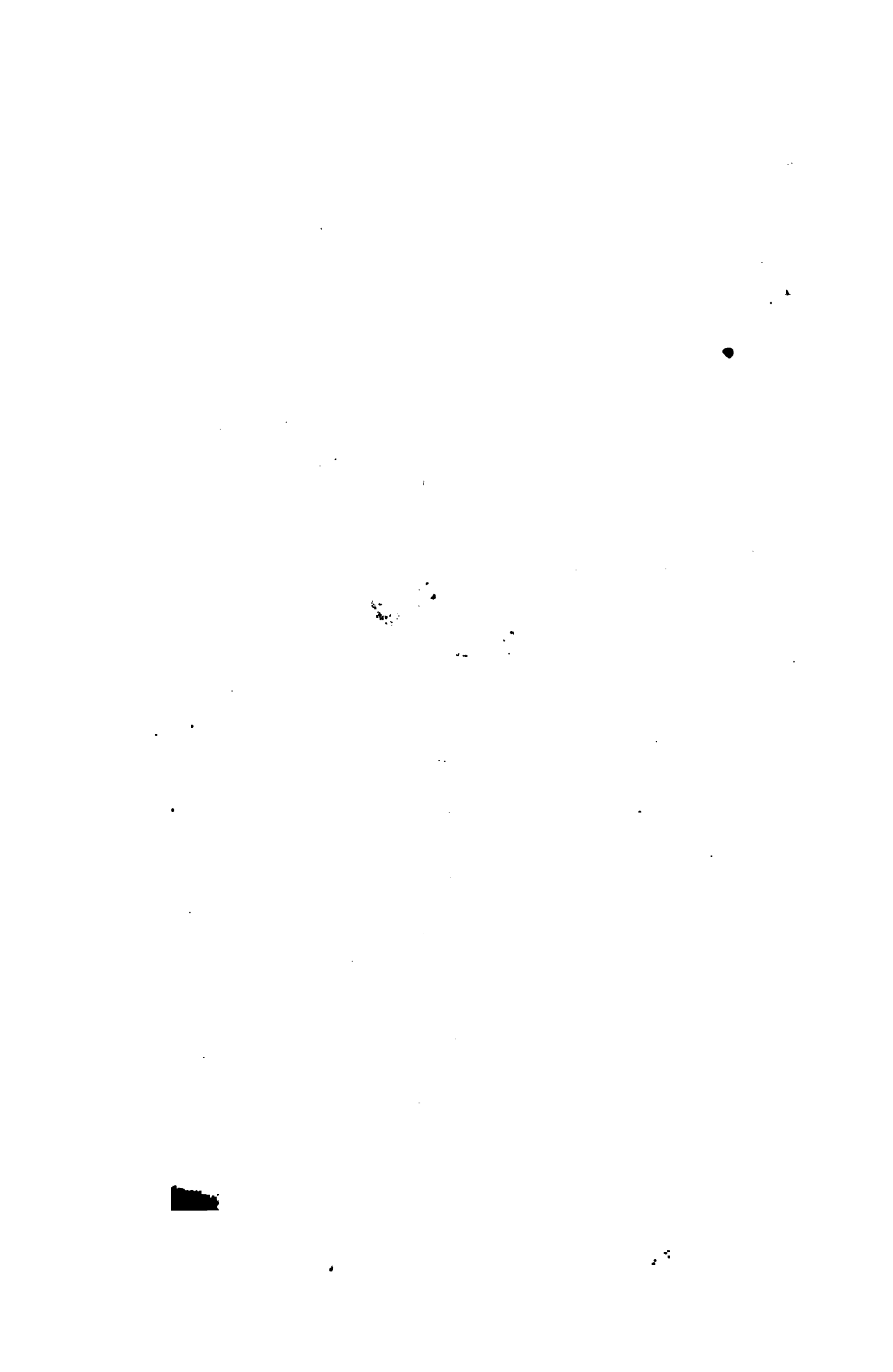
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P R E F A C E.

OF the following papers, the first in order was taken in hand in consequence of a request I received. The others may be said to represent the entirely spontaneous movements of my own thoughts.

To write on the great subject of the opening paper is a thing I should never have undertaken, had not a friend of good experience in literature been pleased to consider me capable of treating it usefully. I have not presumed to attempt an "Explanation," a title actually suggested, but have ventured merely to offer some "Thoughts," on the Lord's Prayer. It has not been my plan to present a digest of the many excellent things that others have written thereon, and therefore such comments and criticisms only have been consulted in the course of my examination as appeared most likely to help me to a good understanding of the very words and phrases found in the text. And in considering the petitions that our Divine Master teaches us so



THOUGHTFUL MOMENTS.

continually to use, I have endeavoured to regard them with constant reference to the requirements of the present day.

In company with the paper I have been speaking of, go some others which but for the present occasion would most likely never have passed out of the writer's hands. They were undertaken, almost wholly, in search of personal satisfaction on various important points, at different periods of my life. And as each was intended to be complete in itself, a leading thought or two can hardly have escaped re-statement occasionally. This is the only defect for which I have any right to crave indulgence, though too many others, it is to be feared, may be found requiring it. I wish however to guard myself against being thought too fond of criticising, instead of befittingly accepting, the mode in which certain matters are very frequently treated by the appointed ministers of our holy religion. But I must state that my object has been generally to examine and not to teach. In these inquiries therefore the numerous and most important points on which all Christians must be agreed are not so much touched on as a few incidental ones on which the sincerest believers may be allowed to differ. I have felt

that the former may, as a general rule, be well left to the able ministrations of our admirable clergy. Would that anything I could do might in the least degree avail to strengthen their hands in their arduous and faithful labours !

But it is perfectly notorious that there are matters in which some disagreement exists, amongst those even who hold sacred office in our Church—questions too on which not priests and deacons exclusively, but those also of highest ecclesiastical rank, hold divergent opinions amongst themselves. From some or other then of the clerical order, a layman not quite dead to all that passes around him must by necessity be so unhappy as to differ; and now, if ever, he must be allowed, whether learned or unlearned, to exercise to the full his right of private judgment. This is what I have been doing to the best of my ability, though neither my position nor attainments are such as of themselves to invest my conclusions with any weight. But a man may be unpossessed of any great scholarship and yet be competent to use for himself the fruits stored up for all the world by those who are known as eminently learned; and it may not be presumptuous in such a person to compare, one with another, the several results,

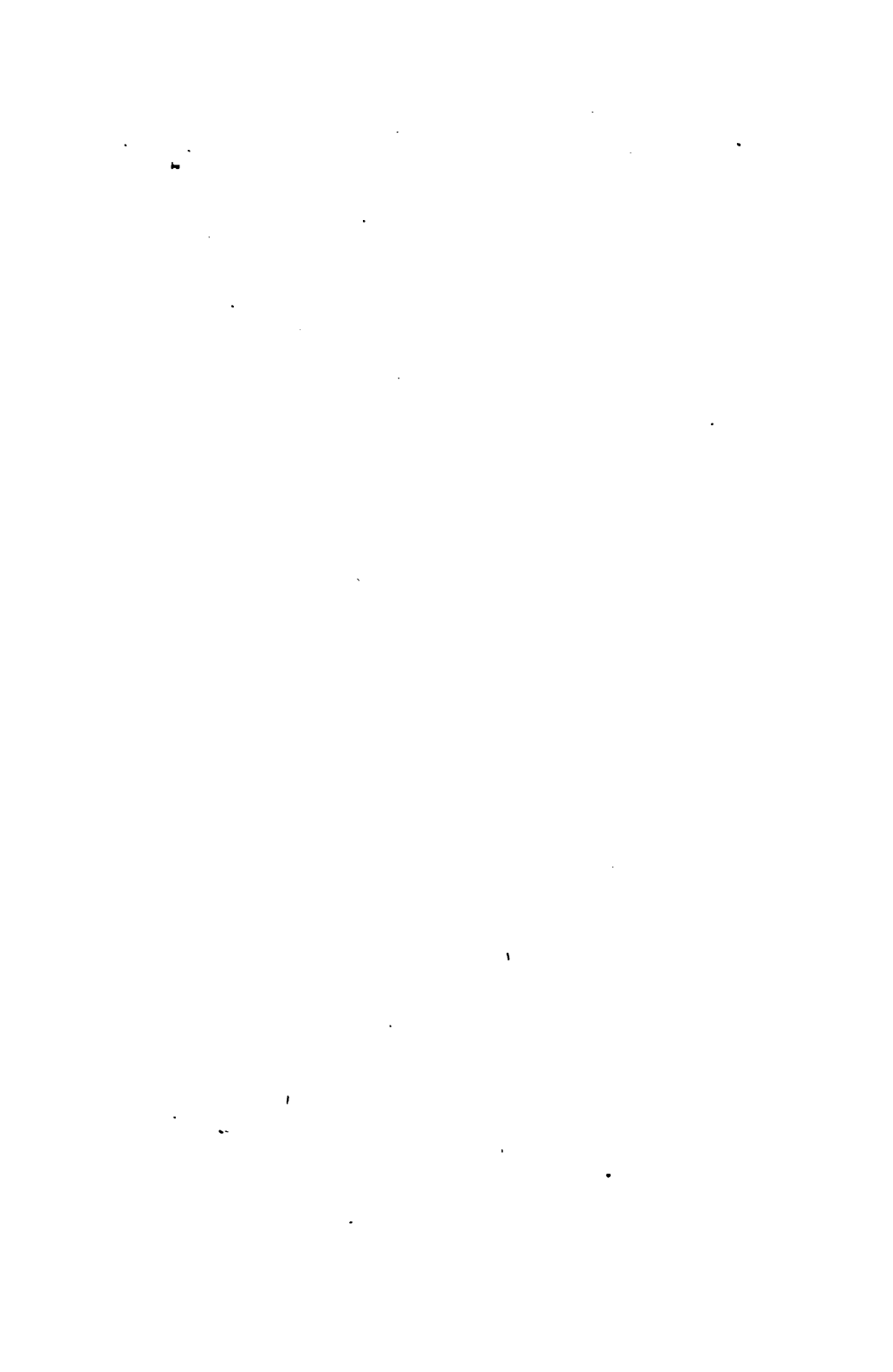
too often conflicting, arrived at by men of erudition very far above his own. In fact, a well-intentioned, thoughtful layman seems to me in these days to be very much in the position of an honest jurymen who has to give his verdict in some matter of difficulty—of disputed handwriting perhaps, or doubtful cause of death—when expert differs from expert, and the evidence of one learned physician directly controverts that of another. The situation is felt to be perplexing. But the good jurymen, without pretending to be skilful or scientific himself, must examine the statements of those who are. And if he patiently exercises what common sense he may be endowed with, and takes a broad and practical view of the whole case before him, and does not suffer the *animus* of one side or the other to affect his discernment, he will often, with the direction and help given by the presiding Judge, come to a satisfactory and useful decision.

When a man whose sincere desire it is to regulate his practice according to God's will, is in perplexity about any disputed points connected with Divine Revelation, and finds his peace of mind threatened, let him, if he has time and opportunity, sit down to a diligent

search throughout the New Testament, for what is written therein on the subject of his doubts; availing himself of the aid of the best critical works and concordances he can find for the elucidation of the text. Thus doing, let him look for that help which St. James, making no distinction between clerical and lay, tells us may be secured by any man who seeks it in the right way.

Most of the following papers are records of examinations thus attempted by the writer. But there are many persons whose necessary engagements in life forbid the working out of such things for themselves. Therefore, in no spirit of positiveness, and with every desire of being corrected where wrong, I have taken the opportunity which the circumstances first mentioned seemed to present, of offering the details of my own humble inquiries; thinking that, as in water face answereth to face, so perchance by their means the heart of some other plain and truth-seeking man may answer to my heart.

April 27th, 1865.



THOUGHTFUL MOMENTS.

I.

THOUGHTS ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

"AFTER this manner, therefore, pray ye," said the Lord Jesus Christ in the Sermon on the Mount when on the point of teaching his followers that Divine Form of words known throughout Christendom as THE LORD'S PRAYER; that is, the Prayer of which Our Lord Himself was the framer—the Prayer formally delivered to us by our Lord. "When ye pray, say, Our Father," &c., was his injunction on presenting the same form with slight verbal alterations when some of his disciples, remembering how John the Baptist and other Jewish teachers were accustomed to put words of devotion into the mouths of their followers, had asked Our Lord to teach them also to pray. And the differing circumstances indicated in Matthew vi. and Luke xi., would lead us to conclude that there must have been two distinct occasions on which, as a transcendent gift of never-ceasing worth, this Prayer was committed to the disciples' keeping. It may be noted also, that Our Lord's preliminary directions which

served to introduce this Prayer, present, if not two several precepts, at least two modifications of the same. Thus, the injunction recorded by St. Luke, actually pointing out to us the very words which Christ's disciples are to say, fully authorises our frequent use of the Lord's Prayer itself; whilst the more general character of the other, which forms our opening quotation from St. Matthew, seems to forbid us to consider ourselves restricted to the unvaried employment of one set of phrases, how high soever their origin, provided our prayers agree in spirit with the Lord's Prayer; provided they follow essentially the Divine Model graciously furnished by Him to the Church.

It being thus our privilege to possess this most emphatically sound form of words, delivered to us by the Lord Himself, it is certainly our duty to ponder in our hearts its various clauses, in order both that by God's help we may learn to frame our own prayers in accordance with his will, and that when we actually use the Lord's Prayer it may not in our case be a vain repetition, but that we may then be found to pray not with the mouth only, but with the understanding also.

First in order, and importance too, come the opening words, "OUR FATHER."

The genealogy we find transcribed by St. Luke has a very remarkable ending. The ancestry of Him whom St. Paul calls "the second Man, the Lord from Heaven," is traced up through many human generations to the earthly father of mankind, and yet one step

beyond this; the last two entries in the list being in these words: "the son of Adam, which was the son of God." And thus, though none can now pretend to have sprung from the royal house of David which figures in this genealogy, we can all, as the children of Adam, claim a greater than David, even God, for our Father. And thus, too, the Gospel teaches us how to answer questions which might suggest themselves to all men when they think seriously of coming before God. How—in what character—shall we regard Him, and ourselves in relation to Him? Are we his slaves only? Is the Almighty that inexorable Being whose projects of vengeance against us can be turned away by nothing but the mental gloom and the self-inflicted tortures of his creatures? Such questions may seem offensive in this day, but they do not express a wholly unnatural feeling, for it is one which has very largely prevailed at all times among mankind. For whatever modern reasoners may say to the contrary, men have had more or less universally, ever since the Fall, an internal conviction of sin, a feeling that they have often incurred the displeasure of their Creator and Judge. "Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips!" were the words of even the Prophet Isaiah when the glory of the Lord was manifested before him. "Who is able to stand before this Holy Lord God?" said the men of Bethshemesh; a question mentally asked by persons of serious thought, not only in their days and circumstances but at all times. The prophets of Baal "cut themselves with knives and

lancets till the blood gushed out upon them." Ancient idolaters made their children to pass through the fire to Moloch, and modern idolaters devise many ingenious means of torturing themselves. But we need say no more of such practices of the heathen when we reflect that in branches of the Christian Church there have never been wanting persons who spend their lives in miserable but voluntary seclusion, and who think they expiate guilt by inflicting castigation on their own debilitated bodies. And has it not been the experience of all people, from the most ancient times to this day, that when any communication is supposed to be made from the other world, any apparition of a spirit to pass before the face, fear and trembling will come, causing all the bones to shake and the hair of the flesh to stand up? Even of notorious unbelievers, how many have been known to give way to feelings of terror at the apparent approach of death, terror hardly to be accounted for by anything but a feeling of appalling nearness to an unseen world, where they expect to meet an avenging Judge and not a Father. Why should all this be so? or rather why should it not be so, since every one with a conscience has an irrepressible conviction that the Eternal God, the Lord of the spirits of all flesh, cannot bear iniquity? We can all say how true to nature is the description of the uneasy shame of the first man, who had no sooner known himself to be an offender than he felt an impulse to escape from the presence of God; and of Peter, who cried out to Jesus, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful

man, O Lord!" True it is that before the Christian era there were a few poets and philosophers, and that in more modern times there have been even poor untutored savages, found to acknowledge that in some sense we are all the offspring of God. But this can go but for little when we consider the characters ascribed by them to the Rulers of the unseen world. Who could compare the Indian's "Great Father," or any of the Divinities of heathen mythology—"Gods many and Lords many"—with the One God the Father whose nature and attributes are revealed in the person of his Son? We must always come back to the truth that it is the Gospel alone which has placed man in his real relationship to the true God.

Still, the question may very naturally occur to us, have all men a right to call God their Father? For do we not read in Scripture that Our Saviour used the awful words to some impenitent Jews, "Ye are of your father the Devil?" It is indeed true that the Saviour said so, but if we would know in what sense we must look to other Scriptures; and there is one, the comforting parable of the Prodigal Son, which may assist us in answering the question a little more fully and satisfactorily. An ungrateful child had left his father's house, liberating himself for ever as he supposed from his father's authority and interference. Neither when wasting his substance in riotous living, nor at the time when he first joined himself to a citizen of a strange country to feed swine, could he have been inclined in any way to acknowledge his father. The

relationship of father and son had practically ceased altogether between them. At these periods it might be said of him that the lusts of his father, the Devil, he was doing. But there is nothing in the parable to lead us to conclude that he was ever once forgotten at home. On the contrary, the return even of this abandoned prodigal was desired and waited for; for whilst he was on his journey back, and yet a long way off, his watching father saw him, ran to meet him, fell on his neck and kissed him. Although as a son he had been dead, the relationship was at once restored; and thus this wonderful parable leaves us without a doubt of God's readiness to receive as his children *all* those lost ones who are willing to return to Him.

Supposing then that all men may, if they will, call themselves sons of God, it must be admitted that some, many indeed, have become "rebellious children;" yet they are not, even as such, denied readmission to their Father's house: whilst those who have been truly "baptised into Christ," born again "of water and of the Spirit," who have received and retained in a more particular sense "the adoption of sons," having indeed become "sons together with Christ, joint heirs with Him," have a peccoliar right to enter the divine presence saying, "Abba, Father!" On the fertile theme of this loving relationship but few words can be said here. But there is one thing that we must not leave without notice.

God, true, great, supreme in all things, is so in his character of a Father. And thus we must judge of

Him more according to what human fathers ought to be, than according to what they always are. For though as a general rule parents love and cherish their offspring, yet all of them are imperfect, many careless, and some unnatural. Cruelties like those of Manasseh and others who sacrificed their own sons, are happily exceptions, yet there are many persons who are sadly deficient in their duties with respect to their children. Still, few fathers will deliberately for bread give their son a stone, for an egg a scorpion, or for a fish a serpent. And children have usually a more or less well-grounded confidence that their parents are acting for their present benefit and attending to their future advancement. Even the pain given by the chastenings or rebukes of a venerated father very seldom cause any diminution of affection on the part of the corrected child. Let us now hear how the inspired writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews puts the case. "We have had fathers after the flesh which chastened us after their own pleasure, but He for our profit." Then, when we are corrected—"and what son is he, whom his father chasteneth not?"—let us never faint, but believe that some great advantage is to be gained if we will but be ready to take it; but let us not be surprised if we are made to feel the correction. Many a person in trouble says, "I could well have borne the blow that has fallen on such or such a friend, and others might not find my burden or trial so very intolerable; but there are circumstances which do render it to me peculiarly grievous and overwhelming." And, no

doubt, such a saying may be perfectly true ; but if we are smitten on the tenderest part, why should we wonder or lose our trust? If a parent or tutor thought to chastise, what respect would a child feel for him, when he only inflicted what could be borne without discomfort or annoyance? Such is, however, a way in which parents and masters do sometimes entirely lose the esteem and reverence of the young. On the other hand some are needlessly severe. It is our comfort to know that Our Heavenly Father can make no mistake, on one side or the other. Christ, who tells his disciples that in this world they must have tribulation, says also to them, "The Father himself loveth you." They must be prepared to take some part in their Lord's sufferings, and they must rejoice in believing that after they have overcome they shall be called to "sit down with Him on his throne, even as He also overcame and is set down with his Father on his throne."

It seemed necessary to say more here of the troubles than the enjoyments of life, because naturally we are not disposed to receive affliction as a proof of the paternal favour of God. But we may well also rejoice in the belief that He is most ready to bestow as many of the blessings of this life as may be for His children's benefit. "No good thing will He withhold from them who walk uprightly." But He is the best judge of what is really good for them. "He knoweth what things we have need of." And if He is a Father, let us honour Him, and let us thank Him for his goodness. The little objects in themselves utterly worthless, offered

sometimes by a child's affection and respect, are by no means considered valueless by a loving parent. God is too high to be benefited by us, yet He condescends to ask for our hearts, and to accept our praises as His glory.*

A few words must be added with regard to the manner of our addresses to Him, of our prayers to God. When, and why, does a child ask his parent for bread, for a fish, for an egg? When, and because, he is hungry, and feels a desire for these things. To apply this to ourselves—and it must be remembered it is Our Saviour's own illustration—our prayer to God should be the reverent expression of our wants when we actually feel them. Abraham's faithful servant prayed at the well when the critical moment was come which should decide between the good success or the mortifying failure of his expedition. Nehemiah prayed when the anxiously-looked-for occasion presented itself which should decide whether the cherished wish of his heart might be carried into effect with the King's consent and aid, or whether he should continue as the servant of a heathen prince in the land of the captivity of his people. The Church made prayer unto God without ceasing, when it saw that without his immediate help the services and life of the great Apostle Peter would be put an end to at once. And when does a child thank his father, but when he has received from his hands

* Ps. 1. 3.

something that he wished for, or something that he feels he shall like, or when his father makes him some promise that gratifies him. If these are apt illustrations, we may go on to ask if it is *prayer*, to force ourselves to kneel down at certain times and orally or mentally get through a set round of so-called devotions, our hearts being really upon other things whilst our half-satisfied conscience is appeased tolerably by the performance of the prescribed routine? All this may in some sort be a sincere act of *worship*, because it is a kind of acknowledgment of the Supreme Being; but, as a thing to be got over, a duty to be got through, is it a much less superstitious act than that of devout Romanists telling their beads? The real time for prayer, is when we feel an earnest desire that God should give us something, or aid us in some way; and for praise, when we find that He has favoured us with some great benefit. But yet there is no reason why we should not like Daniel have some fixed times, when practicable, to kneel before God; but then let us think a little first, or at all events collect our thoughts as we are bending our knees, for we may always find something to ask, or to thank God for.* God is not to be mocked, and it can scarcely be prayer to pretend to ask for things we really do not care in the least about.

Another thing we should not omit to notice is, that these opening words teach us to love one another.

* A verse or two of Scripture, thoughtfully read, will generally present a topic for prayer. Or the model before us, the Lord's Prayer, would always suggest subjects.

We may be many members with different offices, yet all one body, all belonging to one family, all of the same parentage, all taught to call upon God as "Our Father."

And as a closing consideration on these two words, it must be remarked how forcibly they remind us that our state is still one of childhood. Let us then be followers of God as dear children. In our relationship to Him let us imitate them in their dependence on their father for everything they want, in their trustfulness and unbounded confidence, and in their sense of their own very limited knowledge and strength. Thus will the preface of our earliest prayer lead us to look upwards to God with humility, confidence and love.

We now go on to note that we must all address Him as "Our Father WHICH ART IN HEAVEN." We must consider at what an infinite height of glory he is above us, and well weigh our words when we approach Him. And we must endeavour to realise the certainty that there is such a place or a state as HEAVEN, a locality or condition differing completely from anything we see, or have, or know here—something "far better." It can hardly be right then to talk about having it, or anything like it, in this life, where so many things seem to go wrong. Our Lord speaks of mansions in His Father's House which He goes—goes from this world—to prepare for his disciples.* And St. Paul

* It is true that Our Lord said, "He that believeth on me *hath* eternal life." But the word "hath" in this place may probably signify

very strongly contrasts "eternal things" with "things that are seen and temporal," and talks of our earthly house being dissolved before we can enter into possession of the heavenly, of our being unclothed* before we can be clothed upon. We may enjoy the peace of God in this world, and much happiness of body, soul and spirit; but we cannot get out of the annoying, though not really hurtful, reach of the mischief that is so rife here. Though in some sense always rejoicing, we are liable to be very sorrowful too, and to groan being burdened. It is thus even with those who have the first fruits of the Spirit. It is a comfort therefore to be reminded that there is a HEAVEN where all is right, where our Eternal Father is; and that there will be a state of perfect happiness for Christ's disciples hereafter, either in the renovated world, or some other place of heavenly glory and beauty prepared for them in their immortal and spiritual bodies;† for I think it is a poor comfort to be told, as we are sometimes, that we may enjoy heaven now.

"is sure of," "is entitled to," "is the character that shall enjoy eternal life," that "hath the germ of it," hath within him the seed which shall spring up in its season, and give fruit unto life everlasting.

* That is, those who should not be remaining alive at the coming of the Lord.

† The idea, however, of a never-ending happiness for man hereafter in a *renovated condition of this globe* would seem to be negatived by the certainty that is apparently established by modern discoveries and experiments, that the planets of our system will all, after some period of time, at present quite incalculable, inevitably fall into the sun. Heaven must then be removed from this material sphere to some region unseen and eternal. Enough for us to know that the redeemed shall be with their Lord.

We may now, however, cherish the ennobling thought that Our Father is in heaven. I mean it may be a proper and gratifying exercise of self-respect to consider our own high origin. Is it not from God that we have received the breath of life? Being made in the likeness of God, shall we not be planted in the likeness of Christ's resurrection? Let us avoid then all that might tarnish the glory of our celestial relationship. Let us remember whilst on the way to our heavenly home to treat all Our Father's sons as brethren, as high-born friends, entitled together with ourselves to the honours of the heavenly citizenship.

“HALLOWED BE THY NAME.”—It is obvious that all God's children must be jealous for the honour of his sacred Name, and that any desecration of this should be regarded with horror by them. What good son is there who will not rejoice when his father is honoured, and feel uneasy when his character is made light of, misunderstood, or maliciously slandered? Yet we all require to take prayerful heed lest we make light of heaven, of the Throne of God, and of Him that sitteth thereon. And may we not venture to say that we should, each of us, be very careful not to do anything unseemly, anything that might bring merited dishonour on our own body which is the Temple of God, and thus induce in some measure irreverence towards Him who dwelleth therein?

But to enter fully into the spirit of this petition, it may be as well to consider what is meant by the “NAME of God.” In old times the *name* was often a

short description of the character or office of a person. Thus Eve* was "Life," as "the mother of all living"; and it is unnecessary to mention many examples in point of *descriptive* names of persons and places, which must occur to all readers of the Old Testament. We may suppose, then, that God's Names in Scripture would go far to reveal His attributes, that they would bear great reference to the character under which it was His will to be known from time to time. It would be wrong to assert that by means of His Names alone He revealed his divine power and Godhead; but with other methods employed for that purpose we have nothing now to do—an examination of them would be out of place here. And space and time may not permit us to refer to every Name by which God was known of old. But our inquiry would be very incomplete without some examination of the way in which God's character was more and more distinctly declared by means of the various Names under which He was spoken of as the sacred history developed itself.

To begin, then, I shall notice the general Names God and THE LORD, only to say that it is not on these awful words that I intend at all to rely for my purpose. For they are not so plain to us in these days as obviously to carry their own interpretation, and it may be questioned whether at any time their meaning has been or can be fully understood. But it may be well not to pass on without some notice of the original words that stand

* Gen. iii. 20, *margin*. And in lxx. *Zoë*.

for the great Names "God," "THE LORD," "ALMIGHTY."

In pursuance of this purpose I shall rely exclusively on particulars I have gathered from a search of Wigram's "Englishman's Hebrew and Chaldee Concordance," in which elaborate and valuable work I find the ten forms as under :

EHL. "God." This form I note by the Concordance is used sparingly in the Pentateuch, say about fifty times. In the intermediate Books up to Nehemiah it appears only fourteen times. In Job it is very frequently used. In the Psalms it is employed comparatively often. And about twenty-five times in Isaiah. Altogether the quotations in the Concordance occupy about three columns. The Hebrew word is sometimes translated "power," "mighty," "might," in our Bible.

ELAH (Chaldee). "God." Appearing only in Ezra and Daniel, except once in Jeremiah (x. 11, "the gods").

ELOHHEEM. "God." By very far the most usual form for "God," the quotations therefrom occupying about twenty-nine columns of the Concordance, from which it would appear to be used nearly ten times more frequently in the Old Testament than the word *EAL*. The word *Elohheem* is used throughout the first chapter of Genesis, and in the second chapter to the end of the third verse, for "God." It is well known that it is a plural form.

ELOHAH. "God." The quotations from this form occupy about three-quarters of a column only. With the exception of about a dozen, they are all of them taken from Job.

SHADDAYH. "Almighty." Sometimes joined with the word "God," but much more frequently used by itself; but never without reference to the Deity. It is found upwards of thirty times in Job; it is used twice by Naomi on returning to her native land from the country of Moab; and twice by the prophet Balaam. It only appears thirteen times besides in the Old Testament.

AHDOHN. "Lord." Sometimes applied to the Deity in the Old Testament, but in the great majority of cases to men, in the sense of "master" or "ruler," or "lord," as in the expres-

sions "my master," "his master," "his lord," "my lord the King," &c.

ADOHNAHY. "The Lord." The ordinary word for that expression (not in capitals) as applied to the Deity in our Bible. It is sometimes joined to "God" and sometimes not, but I do not notice any instance of its reference to a human being unless that in Ezra x. 3., be one, "The counsel of my lord." There are, I see, about three columns and a-half of quotations under this form in the Concordance.

YAH. "**JAH**," and "**THE LORD**" (in capitals). Used twenty-two times in the Psalms (between the sixty-eighth and hundred and fiftieth, inclusive), and besides that only six times in the Bible, viz.: twice in Exodus and four times in Isaiah.*

YHOVAH. "**JEHOVAH**," and "**THE LORD**" (in capitals). The Great Name, occurring, as every one knows, times almost innumerable in the Old Testament. It seems, however, neither to be found in Ecclesiastes nor the Song of Solomon, nor of course in Esther, as the Deity is not mentioned there. It first appears in Gen. ii. 4.

YEHOHVIH. "**GOD**" (in capitals), joined to "The Lord" (in small letters). Used frequently by Ezekiel, but otherwise very sparingly in the Old Testament. For examples, see the first instance in which it appears, Gen. xv. 2., "Lord God," and the last, Zech. ix. 14., "the Lord God."†

From these brief notices it would seem that those persons are not far wrong who consider that the words usually rendered "God" and "the Lord" (not in capitals), carry the meanings of "Strength," "Power," "Majesty," and "Mastership," and imply an assertion

* In Isaiah xii. 2, and xxvi. 4, "**THE LORD JEHOVAH**" is "**JAH JEHOVAH**."

† There is also the word *Tzoor*, translated "God" in Is. xliv. 8, and Hab. i. 12, but which I give only in a note, because it is more properly rendered "Rock" in the margin of our Bible. What an instance of the great liberties taken sometimes by our translators! It is well to remark, however, how very often God is styled a "Rock" by the writers of Deuteronomy and the Psalms.

that God is the general Ruler of all, the great Lord of the universe. They may be considered, in fact, as conveying an idea of the Creator such as the heathen might vaguely entertain. The plural form, *Eloheem*, was perhaps used by the Hebrews as a superlative, as denoting super-eminence, the possession of all the great and glorious qualities and attributes that could possibly exist; though some theologians look on it as an indication of the mystery of the Trinity. The awful Name *JEHOVAH* is probably unfathomable. Some persons consider it as expressive of eternal self-existence. Others find in it a manifestation of the glorious God who pleases to make his character and attributes known, and vouchsafes to inform us how we are affected by them. It signifies, they think, a God who reveals Himself. Some discern by it the God who makes a covenant with His own people, the great God, Our Saviour. The difficult text, Ex. vi. 3, seems at first sight to state that this great Name *JEHOVAH* had not been in use before the time of Moses, but as it is actually found occurring not seldom in earlier parts of Scripture, that interpretation may be correct which explains the passage as meaning only that the attributes implied by that Name had not been so recognised or known by the Patriarchs as they thenceforward should be by means of God's dealings with His people Israel.*

* I will not be tempted to go into the question here of authorship and dates involved in what is termed "the Elohist and Jehovist controversy." For the objects of this paper I am well content to take the Bible as I find it.

But my main object under this head has not been to dwell on what is incomprehensible, and I pass on more readily to examine Names that may be better understood, and that the most unlearned even may hope to profit by.

The Bible does not say that God revealed Himself by any such Name to Adam. Such a procedure would have been perhaps unnecessary; if the first man was acquainted with God by what might almost be called personal communication, he could scarcely have required to learn a name indicative of the character that, without any indirect agency, he was knowing more and more of day by day. And at the period of the birth of Cain, Eve is represented as speaking of "the LORD" (Jehovah), and at the birth of Seth of "God," with no qualifying or distinctive epithets other than may be conveyed in either of those sacred words themselves. At the time of the birth of Enos, we are told that "men began to call on the Name of the LORD:" we are not informed in what particular way; and the meaning of the passage is not perfectly understood. The first record we find of any distinctive appellation of the Divine Being, I mean in addition to the words "God" or "Jehovah," appears in Gen. ix. 26, where Noah speaks of "The LORD God of Shem." We can hardly tell with the certainty that could be wished what impression would be conveyed to men of the Patriarch's family by this term. Yet some have thought that as Eve received the promise of a Saviour who should spring from her, a similar promise had been given, or rather the same

promise had been renewed, to the Patriarch who might be called the second father of mankind, and Shem had been singled out from his sons as the one in whom the line of the ancestors of the future Deliverer should be continued. In that case, the expression might refer to God, as one faithful to His promises, and ever mindful of His engagements to preserve and deliver His people. The next distinctive Name of the Almighty is met with in Gen. xiv., where we find Melchizedec saying, "Blessed be the Most High God," "Possessor of Heaven and earth." Abram also knew God under the same Name, which he immediately repeated. And this ancient descriptive Name was perhaps the very first by which men would be likely to know God. Next, in Gen. xv., we see that God more intimately revealed Himself to Abram, as his "Shield," his "exceeding great Reward." And we find this favoured man, thus made "the friend of God," humbly addressing Him afterwards as "as the Judge of all the earth," the "everlasting God," the "God of Heaven," and the "God of the earth." In the circumstance of Hagar's distress and consolation, we find the origin of the Name, "Thou God seest me." Isaac speaks of Him as "God Almighty:" he and Jacob also knew Him as the "God of their father Abraham." To Jacob also God revealed Himself as the "God of Bethel," reminding his forgetful servant of neglected vows. To Moses in Horeb, God communicated his mysterious Name, "I AM THAT I AM;" and He made Himself more fully than before known to Israel in Egypt by His great Name "JEHOVAH." He

also called himself the "God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob." Before Pharaoh, Moses spoke of Him as the "God of Israel," the "God of the Hebrews." God now began to be known by the judgments which He executed in the earth; and when "the Lord," as "a Man of War" (Ex. xv. 3), had delivered the Israelites from their powerful oppressors, He called Himself "the Lord their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." On the victory over Amalek, a name was given to the altar of praise, "Jehovah-nissi, the LORD my Banner." On Sinai, He declared Himself "a jealous God;" and when He showed Moses his glory, He proclaimed His name "the LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and upon the children's children unto the third and to the fourth generation." Balaam, who may be supposed, I presume, to have had about the same degree of religious knowledge as was possessed by the Patriarchs, calls God as we find that Melchizedec did, "the Most High," and also, as did the pious men of the land of Uz, "the Almighty." Moses and Aaron cried unto Him as "the God of the spirits of all flesh;" and though Moses had occasion to warn the people that He was a "consuming fire," he encouraged them by saying that the LORD their God was "a mighty God, and terrible" among them against

their foes; and in his solemn parting address, he speaks of Him to Israel as "the Rock of their salvation," "the Rock that begat them," "the God that formed them," "the God of Jeshurun" (an appellation of Israel signifying upright, and perhaps also beloved), "the Eternal God," "the Shield of thy help, the Sword of thy excellency." Rahab, in Jericho, acknowledged Him as "God in the heavens above and in the earth beneath." By Joshua he is called "a holy God, a jealous God." By Hannah, "the LORD of Hosts" and a God of knowledge." By Samuel, "the Strength of Israel." We are told that when David went to move the Ark of God, His Name was called by the Name of "the LORD of Hosts that dwelleth between the cherubim." The Psalmist calls Him "my Rock," "my Fortress," "the Holy one of Israel," "my Shield," "my Glory," "a King for ever and ever," "the LORD strong and mighty," "the LORD mighty in battle," "the King of Glory," "a great King over all the earth," "the God of our Mercies," "the God of our Salvation," "the Holy One of Israel," "the Shepherd of Israel," "the Most High for evermore." The author of Ecclesiastes exhorts the young to remember God as their "Creator." By the book of Ezra we find that Tatnai, the Samaritan officer of Darius, knew the God of the Jews as "the Great God." The Jews, writing to him in reply, speak of "the God of heaven and earth." Nehemiah prayed to "the LORD God of heaven," "the great and terrible God that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love Him and observe His commandments." The godly men in the ancient days of Job of course made no

mention of the mighty acts of God as the strength of Israel, but by that eminent patriarch were uttered those well-known words: "I know that my Redeemer liveth," and in the Book of Job God is called "Our Maker," "the Almighty," "the Preserver of men," "Our Judge." Isaiah heard the seraphim saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy, LORD God Almighty;" and in the book of this prophet, God is spoken of as "a God of judgment," "Our Judge," "Our Lawgiver," "the Creator of the ends of the earth," "the Redeemer (of Israel)," "the LORD the first and with the last," "the Saviour (of Israel)," "the First and the Last," "Our Father," "the God of truth." And we cannot but include in our list the names also by which this great prophet calls the Messiah; for though "Immanuel" was to be the Virgin's son, born as a child, yet He was indeed to be, "Wonderful," "Counsellor," "the Mighty God," "the Everlasting Father," "the Prince of Peace." And Jeremiah, prophesying doubtless also of the same glorious Person, calls Him that "righteous Branch" which should be raised up to David, that "King that should reign and prosper," and "the LORD our Righteousness." We read in the Book of Daniel that the kings Nebuchadnezzar and Darius were brought to acknowledge the great "Revealer of Secrets" as a "God of Gods," "a Lord of Kings," "the Living God and steadfast for ever." David the beloved calls Him "the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love Him, and to them that keep His commandments." Nahum says, "the LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble." Habakkuk

calls Him, "from everlasting mine Holy One." Zephaniah, "the just God." Zechariah prophesied of his being "King over all the earth; one LORD, and His name One." Jesus Christ tells us to address God as "Our Father in Heaven." He calls Him "the Great King;" "the God, not of the dead, but of the living." "Father of Heaven and earth," "the only true God." He teaches us that God is a "Spirit." He Himself addresses Him as "My Father," "Abba Father," "Righteous Father," "Holy Father," and, when risen from the dead, He tells Mary to say to His brethren, "I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." St. Paul, in his Epistles, constantly calls Him "God our Father," and "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." He speaks of Him, too, as "the God, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles;" "the Father of Mercies," "the God of all comfort;" and he tells us how the Spirit of adoption, the Spirit of His Son in our hearts, prompts us to call Him as His Son Jesus did, "Abba, Father." Paul speaks of Him also as "the Father of Glory," "the King eternal, immortal and invisible," "the only wise God," "one God and Father of all, above all, and through all, and in all," "that Great God our Saviour," "the living God, the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe," "the Author (not of confusion but) of peace," "the God of patience and consolation, the God of hope, the God of love and peace." By St. Peter He is called, "the God of all grace," by St. John "the Holy One;" and that

beloved disciple it is who tells us plainly, "God is love." St. Jude speaks of Him as "the only wise God Our Saviour." St. John, again, tells us, in the Apocalypse, how the victorious with the harps of God say in their song, "Great and marvellous are thy works, 'Lord God Almighty,' just and true are thy ways, thou 'King of Saints';" and how the living creatures round about the throne say, day and night, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." And the same Apostle who teaches us in his Gospel "that the Word was God," tells us in the last book of the Bible that "the Word of God" is called "faithful and true," that His Name is "King of Kings and Lord of Lords." The Christian will not wish to be omitted here the sacred Names, dear to all, of JESUS (*Saviour*), CHRIST (*anointed*, as Priest and King), and of the HOLY GHOST, the PARACLETE (*Advocate and Comforter*).

Now such a question as that spoken of by Job may be put in a reverential as well as in a wicked spirit, "What is the Almighty, that we should serve him?" and for satisfaction on this truly important point, we may look back to the preceding pages where many Names of God are given occurring in the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation; and we shall find truly that these are not the names of a mere abstract First Cause, originating the Order of Nature, and then leaving all things to take their own necessary course. But they give assurance of an acting, governing, we might almost say sympathising, personal, God; and

also, as Our Saviour points out to us (Matt. xxii. 32), of the immortality of man.

Referring, then, to our list of the Names by which it pleased God to reveal His character to us, let us see what can be gathered therefrom.

We may begin by noticing that in early days, after the blessing pronounced upon Shem, God's titles, always glorious and majestic, are inaugurated by the assertion of His high dignity, and of His indisputable claim to all created things. This remark applies to the times of the more ancient patriarchs, and Melchizedec, and always to a primary and low condition of religious knowledge, such as was possessed for instance by Balaam ; by Rahab, before the fall of Jericho ; by the friends of Job ; and by Tatnai, the Samaritan. Carrying the eye a little further on, we may see how God expanded the revelation of Himself. Of His faithful friend he was the "Shield" and the "Reward." But to His enemies He was the "LORD of Hosts," terrible, and a "Man of War." As the King of the chosen race, the Head of His peculiar and covenanted people, He was a "Holy and a jealous God." But before long we meet with scattered indications of His good will and gracious designs for all kindreds and tongues, and with manifestations of His universal sympathy and love for the whole world. At length, when the fulness of time was come, He makes it fully apparent that He is the God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews. This is not all we hear of him from the New Testament, for it goes on to reveal Him as the "God of Love and

Peace." And it stops not even there, for the beloved disciple, who was probably the last contributor to the sacred canon, supplies the climax by assuring us that "GOD IS LOVE."

Yet with all our research and notwithstanding all that is revealed to us of the great Name, there must remain much that is mysterious connected with it. "Canst thou by searching find out God; canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?" Let us not, then, exercise ourselves in matters too high for us. We may, and we should, with humble satisfaction rejoice that there are many things concerning God which He hath "revealed, which belong to us and to our children." But it would ill become us to discuss in terms too minute these mysterious, those "secret things which belong to the Lord our God." There is one thing that we may search into and study with the closest attention, and that is the character of Christ, "who is the Image of God." Those who thus acquaint themselves with the Almighty, and those who can join the Apostle in saying from the heart, "Blessed be the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ," are the persons who can best observe our Saviour's injunction, and say, when they pray, "Hallowed be Thy Name."

"THY KINGDOM COME."—This is a submissive expression of acquiescence in the rule of Our Heavenly Father, of a desire for the prevalence of righteousness and truth over all that is evil and false, and for the advent of that time when all the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of Our Lord and of

His Christ. All events are in the hands of God, and come according to the decree of the Most High, who putteth down one and setteth up another; yet, if we sincerely desire the speedy establishment of His kingdom we shall certainly ourselves endeavour to promote it. No idleness will be excused because we cannot control God's providence. We know that it is only by God's bounty that we can be fed, only by His decree that we live, yet we do not fail on that account to work for our bread and to be careful of our lives. It is right to acknowledge that the kingdom which shall never be destroyed is a stone cut out of the mountain without hands, and we must not, therefore, be surprised if our poor labours seem ineffectual in working for it; yet we should remember that it is by means of human agency, prospered by God, that Christ's kingdom has hitherto made its progress. God had sworn that Canaan should be a possession for Abraham's seed, yet the Israelites had to fight to establish God's rule there. Christ had said that the Gospel of the kingdom should be preached to all nations, yet He ordered the disciples to pray that labourers might be sent into the vineyard. Each of us then, whilst using this part of the Lord's Prayer in sincerity, must faithfully do what he can towards the enlarging and establishing of the kingdom of justice and peace. But whilst a man does this in the way that he conscientiously thinks best, let him see that he blames not his brother who may be labouring quite as honestly and effectually in his own way, though his manner of work may not be precisely the

same. Let not for instance even those devoted ones who find it their vocation self-denyingly and religiously to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, to carry relief to the miserable, and to combat the ignorance of the poor in their wretched dwellings, despise the mothers, daughters or sisters, who find their sphere of Christian duty in a more secluded place—in promoting the welfare of the family and household at home. Let not him who employs a most useful talent by teaching in a Sunday school, exalt himself over another who does not consider himself called to do so, but who may, for aught that can be known, be working in some equally beneficial though less conspicuous way. Neither let the fluent, ready, zealous Christian, who has a talent for introducing religious matters in common conversation and mixed company, and of speaking of his Lord in all places so that he may by all means save some, blame a brother whose tongue is all but tied on such subjects, though with an equally warm heart he may be effecting much by unostentatious perseverance in well-doing, or by offering to his neighbours the example of a steady, consistent, Christian life. But let us not excuse *ourselves*, but be rigid in our examination, whether the Kingdom of God which cometh not with observation is truly set up within us—whether we are at least doing, or endeavouring to do, something either at home or out of doors, as labourers together with God. Though the Son of Man must needs be betrayed, yet “woe,” said Christ, “to that man by whom He is betrayed;” so, conversely, the Kingdom of

Our Omnipotent Lord must needs be established, but happy is every one who has any part in the setting of it up.

“THY WILL BE DONE IN EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.”—The Messiah is represented as saying, when He cometh into the world, “I delight to do thy will, O God !” And all those whom He condescends to call His brethren should find happiness and satisfaction in performing it too, and in hastening the time when their Heavenly Father’s will shall be done throughout the earth. To promote this object they should be ready to disregard personal inconvenience and risk. They have their object before them, and the inducement is sufficient. Soldiers, statesmen, money-getters, find their interest and activity excited by the obstacles they have to overcome. Many are the sacrifices they cheerfully submit to before they can attain success ; and they are quite uncertain after all whether their toils, risks, and plans, will not result in failure. But those who abound in the work of the Lord are assured that their labour shall not be in vain. They are all the time, too, working for themselves ; for when God’s Kingdom is established Christ has declared that His followers shall have a part with Him in His Throne. They work as philanthropists also, for the passages of Scripture abound which prove that God’s will is “good will to man.” Perfect happiness, then, is in Heaven, where the will of God is perfectly done, and happiness will prevail on earth according to the extent in which God’s will is heartily performed here. Think what the state of the world

will be when the principle's of Christ's Gospel shall be fully carried out. For what are the accidents and troubles springing from natural causes compared with the miseries due to man's angry passions, his malice and his vice. The thoughts that come out of the heart of man unsubmissive to the will of God are infinitely more mischievous in their effects than the fury of the storm or the stroke of the sun. Whence come wars and fightings, the ravages of a hostile army, the disease of the camp, the famine of the siege, the agonies of the wounded, the slaughter of the combatants, the grief and misery of the widow and orphans of the slain soldier? What dire calamities many families endure from the fraud of those they had trusted, from the vice of the libertine, from wicked oppression and calumny! How much do many men suffer from their own evil passions, and from obstinately setting their hearts on things contrary to the will of God? The whole creation groans for the time when all men shall believe on Him whom God hath sent, and shall do the will of their Father in Heaven.

But it must not be lost sight of that the expression we are considering, "Thy will be done," is also a *submissive* one. If we compare this part of the Lord's Prayer (Matt. vi. 10) with some words of Our Saviour when He was suffering His agony in Gethsemane (Matt. xxvi. 42), we shall find the term is precisely the same in both places, in Greek, *γενεθήτω το θέλημα σου*—in English, "Thy will be done." When using these words, therefore, we should, like Our Saviour, be

ready to renounce our own pleasure, our own will, in favour of God's. We must be prepared for self-sacrifice, at all events till the time come for the "restitution of all things;" for at present there is opposition at work. Consider what was said once by the Prince of Peace—by Him who came to establish the Gospel of Peace, "I am not come to send peace on earth, but a sword." We must not confound the way with the end. Fiery persecutions, bloody wars, and alienating domestic disputes, may be inseparable from some necessary parts of the triumphant progress of the Gospel, which goes on conquering and to conquer; yet its announced object and certain end is the establishment of peace upon earth. Happy are those, St. Peter tells us, "who suffer according to the *will* of God," for they may safely "commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator." The regeneration is not yet, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory; but it shall come; and then those who have sown even in tears and blood and those who reap shall rejoice together. For the will of God shall be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

Thus far does this Divine formulary lead us in the direct adoration of God, which must ever be the foundation of all true and Christian worship. So therefore Our Lord says in the very discourse containing this prayer: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." And it may be well to note that the mindfulness shown by God the Almighty Father for His own glory bears no resemblance to what in man would be an unamiable

exhibition of selfishness ; for, whatever is for the glory of God is sure also to promote the general well-being of His creatures. Benefits to the community, and personal advantages to ourselves, are included in the good things which shall follow our perseverance in seeking first God's kingdom and righteousness. How strikingly all this is shown in the diverse cases of the two first Kings of Israel. There can hardly be a more impressive illustration of the happy consequences following devotion to God's glory, and of the miserable results attending the neglect of it. Saul and David both began well ; for Saul seems to have been at first an amiable, modest and courageous man, and energetic on occasions ; and David's good qualities there is no need to say a word about. In process of time Saul, notwithstanding some very considerable successes, became gloomy, morose, violent, and unnatural. Meeting then with disaster after disaster, he grew superstitious and melancholy, broke his own tyrannical regulations, saw the ruin of his family, his plans, and his hopes, and fell upon his own sword. It is unnecessary to point out how David's career, though chequered with some vicissitudes, differed from Saul's ; how he brought prosperity and honour to Israel, and how he left his beloved son in possession of a glorious kingdom. And the radical difference between the two was, I think, this—Saul never sought first the kingdom of God and his righteousness—David, in the main, did. Consequently, other desirable things were not added to Saul, but to David they were. Saul, though at first well meaning,

was a selfish man ; he sought but his own honour and the aggrandisement of his family. I am not aware of any instance of his showing regard to God's glory. "Honour *me* now," he said to Samuel, "before the elders of my people and before Israel." What a contrast this and other things that every one may think of, to the whole of David's course. Trust in God, earnest desire for God's honour, zeal for God's Kingdom, appear in his history and in his Psalms. And what was the effect of his life ? He found the people in an abject condition, and he died the honoured monarch of a prosperous and splendid state, knowing with joy that his son's dominion would be a more magnificent one than his own. It did happen, indeed, in the course of his great career, that his prosperity was too much for him, and that he lowered himself to the commission of acts of cowardly meanness which we should have suspected David of least of all ; but then how easy was Nathan's task in dealing with him ? How different the measure of this Prophet's success from that of Samuel when Saul was to be reproved. Saul, full of excuses and conditions, David unreservedly and heartily repenting. No doubt, too, the man who had expressed himself so nobly, and acted with so much fine feeling and delicacy towards Saul and his sons, must, when brought to himself, have felt most keenly his own atrocious injustice and treachery towards Uriah. But he suffers none of this personal sentiment to appear in his psalm. "Against *Thee*," he says to God, "Against Thee only have I sinned and

done evil in Thy sight." His offence against the Majesty of Heaven was what bowed down his heart. Let us, then, receive instruction from the history of these two men—Saul and David. I do not mean now with respect to any particular sins into which they fell, but to the general course of their lives. David sought the glory of God. Saul sought but his own. The result in each case we have now seen.

We may be sure, however, that our Heavenly Father forgets not the necessities and interests of His children, with respect both to this world and that which is to come. How good is His will! We have more reasons for ready submission to it than we often think at first, especially when at the moment it is hard to bear. For is there one among us who cannot look back upon some disappointment, some bitter mortification, some damper to high hope, which can now be acknowledged as the best thing even in a temporal point of view that could have happened for us—as a thing we would now, on no account whatever, have been without? And the fault must rest with us if for eternal concerns all things do not work together for our good.

In the main, indeed, what we have been considering hitherto has related to the Kingdom of God. But we are encouraged to lay our personal wants before the Throne of Grace.

"GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD."—In examining any part of Scripture, it is best to begin by endeavouring to ascertain the meaning it was origin-

ally intended to convey. I do not suppose that when Our Saviour came to this part of the Prayer, any of His hearers thought he was referring to food for the soul, or that He intended them so to understand it. The true Christian may indeed by this passage be reminded earnestly to seek a supply of that bread which comes down from Heaven ; but it would seem that Our Lord, who well knew what things we have need of, teaches us here to look upwards for a supply of our *temporal* necessities from God. And our efforts, as already hinted, should second our prayers. Bread is called in Scripture the "staff of life." "To eat bread" signifies, in most places, to take a meal, sometimes even a feast of various good things ; and there can be scarcely a doubt that the prayer goes so far as to refer at least to all things needful to support a man in health and comfort. It is a prayer for food convenient for us. As to the quantity and quality of this, it is impossible to lay down accurately any rule. In a man's own case, he may make great mistakes ; how much more so in the case of his neighbours. Let us leave this matter then with God, without defining anything. We may be said, in this prayer, to ask for a sufficient portion of this world's wealth ; for in the present state of society, bread cannot be purchased without that commodity or medium which it is found convenient to make a representative of the value of labour, industry and property. It may prevent many envious and hurtful feelings to consider the truth, that what is amply sufficient for one person may be almost destitution for another. St. Paul directs

his converts to abide in the calling in which they were called : and how different men's callings are ! How different the amount of wealth required, even for bare necessities, in various grades of society. Numbers in the condition of mechanics, and of those who serve in our families, have wages more than enough for all their wants ; and, being well able if they would to put by something from their earnings, are virtually richer than many of their employers or masters, who are often at their wits' end for means to maintain with propriety their relative and providential position.

Again, it has possibly so happened sometimes that a blameless man of good repute, recently put into the office of a Bishop, has, though beginning to be entitled to an income that sounds a large amount, found cause earnestly to use this prayer for daily bread, when being justly expected to show himself a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, he has been obliged to keep almost open house for his Clergy and others, largely to support local and national charities, and adequately to maintain the dignity looked for in a member of our House of Peers. Whilst many a good Clergyman in his diocese would be rich with as many hundreds a year as this Prelate—sober, just, holy and temperate—has thousands. Again, it has been truly said, that one man's food is another man's poison. For some persons, the plainest fare is best, both as to body and soul ; but others really require for well-being of mind and body rich and exciting meat and drink. So St. Paul said to Timothy, " Drink no longer water, but a little wine."

And the same Apostle teaches us that God has created meats to be received with thanksgiving ; and also, that every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if received with thanksgiving ; and yet he says that under certain possible circumstances he would determine to eat no flesh while the world stood. From all these things, the deduction seems to be this—let each one of us beware of covetousness or luxury in himself, but at the same time carefully avoid judging another, whose particular circumstances he cannot possibly know. “ To his own master he standeth or falleth.”

To carry this idea a little further, a caution may be added to the suffering poor or the unsuccessful, not to harbour hard thoughts with respect to the rich ; for there are some who may seem to those below them to be indulging in extravagant profusion, whilst personally they are men of real self-denial, obliged, for sufficient reasons, to maintain a stately liberality. Doubtless, in many instances, the poor will have to complain of harsh treatment till God's Kingdom shall be universally established ; but let us not dishonour the power of the Gospel by failing to recognise the difference it has already wrought in this respect in all parts where it is even nominally established. Whilst we fully believe that, as in St. James's time, very many of the poor are still the “ chosen of God, rich in faith, heirs of the Kingdom,” we may also hope that that Apostle would scarcely say in the present day in any Christian country, that, as a general thing, the rich, with cruel oppression, “ drew them before the judgment seats,

blasphemed that worthy Name by which they were called, and kept back by fraud the hire of the labourers who reaped down their fields." It is a main object of life (and their main difficulty too) with some great and rich men of these days to try how best to benefit those below them. Still, it may be well to remind many of them when they say, "*Give us our daily bread,*" to consider their neighbours, the poor. With what indulgence should we regard their faults! When we think how many excuses more or less valid, which the rich from actual want of experience can hardly appreciate, may keep them from public worship; how many chances there are that when they do get to church there is a great deal of the service and of the sermon that they cannot clearly hear or comprehend; when we search the crowded cottage to find where the poor labourer could retire to read his Bible or fall on his knees in quiet even if his hard work had not made him too drowsy, we are almost tempted to ask whether Our Saviour, were He to come amongst us now, might not say, "How hardly shall a very poor man enter into the Kingdom of Heaven!" With God all things are possible, and He accepteth a man according to that he hath, and not according to that he hath not; but it is to be feared that, fully admitting the benevolent and most useful exertions of the Ministers of Religion, Scripture Readers, City Missionaries, District Visitors, and Bible Women, we could hardly say, as characteristic of our present state of society, that, as a class, the poor have the Gospel preached to them. Let

the rich who have, try to alter all this; for might not St. James, if he were to return to write a new Epistle, still find some cause to repeat, "My brethren, these things ought not so to be!" It is manifest, however, that great exertions are being used for spreading sound Christian education, and towards placing before the poor examples which may lead them to find out how to help themselves. Let us aid such good plans as much as we can, for they seem to afford the most likely means of raising the condition of the poor, and of assisting them to make what they get for their daily bread go as far as possible.

It may be some comfort too to the unsuccessful and to the poor, to remember that it is ordered by God's good providence that there should be divers conditions in life; that there must be men of low as well as of high degree, poor as well as rich. The state of having all things in common if recommenced could never last very long; when once tried it was not apparently followed by good consequences, for disputes about inequality of division soon arose, and afterwards poverty that had to be succoured by Gentile alms; the previously rich in the community having nothing left to give. Let not the unfortunate imagine that all the great are like Haman, who would destroy a whole nation because one of its countrymen would not bow before him; or that all rich men are like Dives, who thought scarcely of anything but maintaining a splendid appearance and faring sumptuously every day. Abraham, into whose very bosom the pious

Lazarus of the parable was carried, was not the less faithful for his great possessions. Job was not the less perfect and upright because the greatest of all the men in the East. And when the sacred body of Our Lord was left on the Cross abandoned by all His poorer disciples, Joseph, a rich man of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, were the men who came forward to show honourable regard to the Crucified One. Not only may the poor be rich in faith, but the rich may lay up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come. When the unfortunate are envious of the rich, they equally with them are open to the charge of "trusting in riches," for they show how they would do so if they could but obtain them.

It may be as well to add, that though the saying should not be true of the Christian, as it is of most men who have not faith, that "enough is a little more than any man has," such persons are blamed in the Scriptures who do not use proper exertion to provide for those of their own house, and we are led to hope that God may "prosper us," so as to enable us "to lay by in store" for charitable purposes. We must be willing to work in order that we may eat; and then must trust in God who gave manna to the Israelites in the desert, "each man according to his eating," to give us as sufficient provision for "this day" as in St. Matthew, "day by day" as in St. Luke; never wishing to feel free from dependence on our Heavenly Father for the future. For we should remember that

the over-anxiously accumulating Israelite in the desert only found his superfluous store to become a heap of loathsome putrefaction, and that any treasures laid up here may be corrupted by moth or rust, or may tempt the thief to break through and steal. It is right however to take no narrow view of what is said in the New Testament about wealth and poverty. As we have just seen, the precepts are various, and sometimes qualify one another. There may be injurious excess in all things. Whilst the rich in this world were shown a more excellent way of being rich, they were not in every case charged to denude themselves and families of all that God's bounty had bestowed upon them, any more than every man with whom Jesus Christ spoke was ordered to forsake his family, and follow literally in Our Lord's personal train. The grand principle is doubtless to be anxiously careful for nothing; but in carrying this out into action, details must necessarily vary. It may not be amiss to remark with regard to some of the actual directions uttered from the mouth of Jesus Christ, that in his times the climate of Galilee and the conditions of life there were vastly different from those of our northern regions in modern days. The requirements of the people amongst whom He generally lived were but few: very slight shelter sufficed, and nature was easily satisfied. Thus poverty, there and then, was by no means the condition the word represents in these climes, in our present highly artificial state of society. It is too much to be feared that here, and now, deep poverty is only another term for

degradation and misery, almost unavoidably leading to irreligion and vice. And if a man does not use all proper caution, and take all honest steps to keep it at a distance from himself and those depending on him, I hardly see how he can, with consistency, pray for daily bread—that is, for a supply of what is necessary for the continued support and well-being of his system, body, soul and spirit. But whilst endeavouring to perform our duty in life, we may be well content to leave the future with God, believing that all things shall be ordered for our good as long as we can with faith and love look upwards to Our Heavenly Father and say, “Give us this day our daily bread.”

“FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES AS WE FORGIVE THEM THAT TRESPASS AGAINST US.”—Forgiveness of sins is a thing that all men, save One, since the creation of the world have needed, and that all men will need as long as the world (the unrenewed world) shall last. For “there is not a just man upon earth that sinneth not.” We have already seen how such an one as even the prophet Isaiah, when he found himself before Him whom the seraphs were calling “Holy, Holy, Holy,” felt the misery of his offences—felt that he had iniquity that required to be taken away, sin to be purged, and that he was but a man of unclean lips. Daniel, of whom nothing but what is good is recorded, confessed *his own sin*, as well as the sin of his people Israel, before the Lord. A man as perfect and as upright as Job was forced to say, when the Lord answered him, that he abhorred himself, and repented in dust and

ashes ; and in his poetic language he has represented the Almighty as charging his very angels with folly. Thus far for the excellent of the earth. What then shall be said of those who turn away from Him that speaketh from Heaven ? or of those even to whom the word of God has not come ? St. Paul confirms what the Psalmist writes, " There is none righteous, no not one ! " and the frightful crimes that are committed day by day show too plainly that the Scripture saith this not in vain. And yet some writers whom we are forced to consider blind to what passes around them, endeavour to make us think that human nature has no need of renewal. But most truly St. John affirms, " If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. " To some it may seem that this assertion is qualified in the case of real Christians by what the Apostle says in another chapter, " Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not "—" He cannot sin because he is born of God " ; and also by what Our Saviour declared with reference to all the twelve except Judas, " Ye are clean. " But these apparently opposing statements may easily be reconciled, as may at once be seen if we consider some of Our Lord's own words recorded by St. John himself, " He that is washed, " said Christ, " needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit. " In the English translation this seems rather hard thoroughly to comprehend ; but all the difficulty arises from the fact that two different Greek words are unhappily translated by the same English word, "*wash*," in this verse. The *former* of the two, " he that is *washed*," comes from

the verb *λουω*, which is found in five other places in the New Testament.* In three, if not in four of these, it manifestly signifies the washing or *bathing* of the *whole body* of a person or animal: in the last instance it refers to our spiritual cleansing in the fountain figuratively opened for sin and uncleanness—the blood of Christ. The *other* “*wash*,” viz.: that in the latter part of the verse, is from the verb *νιπτω*, which is used in seven other places in the New Testament,† and in every one of them with reference merely to the washing of some particular *part* of the body, as face, hands, eyes, feet. It seems obvious, therefore, that Our Saviour, in this passage, thought fit to illustrate his meaning by an allusion to the usual preparation for an Eastern entertainment, reminding his disciples, and especially the now eager Peter, that he who by *bathing* had put himself in a state fit to join the honoured guests he was invited to meet, had by so doing become personally clean, and on arrival needed only, before taking his place at the feast, to wash his feet, which, with the rest of his body, had been clean before, but had unavoidably become somewhat soiled by the mire or dust of the way. Thus Christ’s followers who have their “*hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and their bodies washed‡ with pure water*,” may be called clean. They do, indeed, sin in their unavoidable con-

* Acts ix. 37; xvi. 33. Heb. x. 22. 2 Peter ii. 23. Rev. i. 5.

† Matt. vi. 17; xv. 2. Mark vii. 3. John ix. 7, 11, 15. 1 Tim. v. 10.

‡ *λελουμένοι*. Heb. x. 22.

tact with evil in the world, but not voluntarily and rebelliously; only in weakness, and against their own desire and principles. The more the divine seed abides in them, and the more they abide in Christ, the less they commit sin. They are no longer on the side of sin; the general course of their life is in opposition to it. They belong to the hosts which shall at length be more than conquerors: though, as many successful armies do, they sometimes meet reverses before victory. Peter himself, whom Our Lord had just declared clean, was grievously soiled in the deepest miry clay very shortly afterwards. The force of circumstances and the power of Satan together proving too much for his strength, dragged him into it; but he could not long be detained there. "He went out and wept bitterly." "When he thought thereon, he wept;" and even then the precious blood of Christ was being shed, who "washed"* him from his sins.

Perhaps we need say no more here of the means by which alone our forgiveness comes, for Our Saviour does not allude in this prayer to the costly sacrifice which God had designed to be the way of reconciliation between the sinner and Himself. At that time the sacrifice was not completed, nor were the people then in a state to comprehend the highest object of the Saviour's mission. Even His chosen disciples long continued resolutely to shut their ears against every intimation of their Master's passion. As the least in

* λουσάντι, Rev. i. 5.

the Kingdom of Heaven was greater than John the Baptist, so do we know more of these mysteries than did any of the Apostles during Christ's lifetime. But our object is not now to enlarge on doctrine, but rather to seize as precisely as possible the meaning of the various parts of the Lord's Prayer. In thus examining the particular clause now before us, we find in the English Bible that the text in Matthew (vi. 12) is, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors;" and in Luke (xi. 4), "Forgive us our sins for we also forgive everyone that is indebted to us;" and there could not well be closer translations from the Greek. In these two corresponding clauses there are combined, an acknowledgment of our sins, and of our errors in having wandered from God's ways, a prayer for the remission of our faults, and a profession of our own readiness to forgive those who are indebted to us; that is, those who have failed in their duties with respect to us—who have not behaved towards us as they ought. For I think from the ways in which I find the verb *ὀφείλω* used in the New Testament (the root of the words here translated, "indebted," "debtors," "debts") that all the above-mentioned meanings are conveyed thereby in this place. Thus the general idea placed before us is, that we *owe* to God the perfect obedience of our lives, but that we have *failed to pay* that obedience; and, then, our *debts* represent our *acts of disobedience*, our *offences* towards God; and so in acknowledging that we are *debtors* to God, we confess that we are *sinner*s. Indeed, these words, debtors and sinners, are used

synonymously by Our Saviour ; for in Luke xiii. 2 and 4, we find in our English Bible, in both verses, the word *sinner*s ; whereas, literally translated, in the former instance only it would be “ *sinner*s ” (ἁμαρτωλοί) and in the latter “ *debtors* ” (ὀφειλέται). We may say then that Our Lord encourages us to ask God for a discharge for our debts, and we may be sure He would not have directed us to pray for that which we could never have. Every thinking person must find himself, to say the least of it, burdened with debt towards God ; and when a truth like this is asserted by our consciences, it is beside the purpose to stop and inquire *how* we became subject to this debt. How shall we be *relieved from its burden* ? becomes the real question. The servant who owed ten thousand talents and had nothing to pay, dealt with the fact as he found it. , He is not represented as saying, “ I could not well avoid this debt ; a great part of it consists in pecuniary obligations which descended to me from my father and my ancestors—a considerable portion has almost unavoidably accumulated from the expenses of my family, and it has certainly been increased by requirements of my own, various things almost indispensable for a person in my condition and with my habits of life. Besides, I have not been treated handsomely, or even fairly, by some of my own equals. Though certainly a debtor to my lord for a very considerable amount, yet for some small sums I myself am a creditor by my fellows. It is true that if I could get those amounts in, they would not pay nearly what I owe ; but still, no one has the right to claim my debt

till all the world acts properly towards myself. Till all my neighbours do their duty in this respect, my great creditor has no right to enforce his claim against me." But the debtor in the parable whatever his faults may have been was at all events wiser than to lose time by talking in this weak strain with himself; wiser than men of our days, who, when they cannot be blind to the misery they see around them and to their own danger of the impending judgments of God, only set to work discussing the origin of evil, and try to deceive themselves by repeating that it is a necessity to obey their natural passions and unrestrained animal instincts; and that, after all, they are not worse than many of their neighbours. But the more sagacious person in the parable, as soon as he found that his debt, however contracted, was bringing him into trouble, fell down and besought his lord, and obtained forgiveness of all. Thus, accordingly, Our Saviour directs us, in the Lord's Prayer, to *ask* for forgiveness, and represents the lord, in the parable referred to, as saying, "I forgave thee all that debt *because* thou desiredst me;" and it will be difficult to point out in Scripture the part that leads us to think that sentence will not be executed on us if we restrain prayer before God. But there is one thing not to be forgotten when we thus pray, and that is, the sincere profession we should make of our forgiveness towards those who have done as they ought not with respect to ourselves. How apt are many, perhaps all of us at times, to play the part of the man whose debt of ten thousand talents

was freely forgiven, but who could not show compassion to his poor fellow-servant who owed him an hundred pence! Nothing in the Bible can be plainer than Our Saviour's comment on this part of the Lord's Prayer, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." *

"**LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION.**" Now again an apparent difficulty meets us. For we are elsewhere plainly taught that temptation to evil does not come from God; yet here we seem authorised to believe that He does sometimes lead us into temptation. There may probably be persons who think the difficulty is got over by saying that different kinds of temptation are indicated in the Scriptures; that God may tempt in the way of proving or trying a man's character and that is all, but that the Devil tempts to sin. I think it as well to avoid, if possible, such fine distinctions as these. This is a case like many others where we must compare Scripture with Scripture before we fully make up our minds about the meaning of a text. St. James cautions us when under temptation, against saying that we are tempted of God, "for God," he says, "cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth He any man;" and yet, Our Saviour speaks of God's leading us into temptation; and in other parts of Scripture, God is said to have tempted men, as

* *παραπτοματα*. This word is not actually found in the text of the Lord's Prayer, but the fact of its being immediately afterwards employed as an explanation or synonym of the word "debts," authorises its use in the ordinary version, and in the Prayer Book, &c.

Abraham and David. I apprehend that St. James meant this: "Let no man when feeling drawn and enticed by his own lusts to commit evil, say, I need not trouble myself to resist this temptation, for it could not have come upon me without God's permission. I cannot do wrong except by his immutable decree, and if, therefore, I am led to do evil it is with his sanction, and I am not to be blamed; I need fear no consequences!" St. James proves the wickedness and folly of this by showing that God is perfectly good; that He is the Author of every good and perfect gift, and is thus the very opposite to evil. But for some purposes, as yet mysterious, the existence of sin and trouble is for a time permitted in this world, and as long as that is the case we must be subject to temptation. God, in fact, permits our being tempted to evil. Our own inclinations are often opposed to what is right. Satan is yet out of his prison; the time has not come yet for the Devil and death and the grave to be cast into the lake of fire. We know also that Our Saviour was in all things like unto his brethren, and we are expressly told that God's beloved Son was *led up*, nay, even *driven, by the Spirit* into the wilderness to be tempted of Satan. He yielded not to the temptation, but He well remembered how He suffered being tempted; and in this Prayer, and also afterwards when on the point of entering his last and most dreadful trial, He, who knew what to be tempted was, taught us to pray against being led into temptation. Like sickness, hunger, pain, and loss, temptation is

doubtless *an evil* ; against all these things we are authorised to make our requests, yet they are nevertheless very often permitted or sent by God ; but when, as in the case of Our suffering Saviour, after strong crying and tears the cup is not removed, or if, as in the case of St. Paul, after beseeching the Lord earnestly, the thorn in the flesh departs not—there is strength given for the occasion, the prayer returns not void. And when we are even at our worst, I believe that God often sends us some solace, some acceptable mark that He has not altogether forgotten us, though it may be perhaps in the shape of something small in comparison with our trouble, totally insufficient to remove or cure it. What could a created angel do to help Our agonised Lord in his passion ? A mere creature who could not drink one single drop of the bitter cup, who could take no part whatever in the sacrifice that was being offered ! Yet, can we doubt that for the moment Our Lord's human nature was strengthened ? that the sympathy of this heavenly friend and servant gave Him a gleam of pleasure ? So I believe that in the midst of almost intolerable mortification and inward wretchedness, occurrences of material comfort, sometimes even unexpected pieces of worldly prosperity or personal success, things which cannot possibly modify the particular temptation we are groaning under, do help to give partial ease, and divert the current of our saddest thoughts sometimes. But if we wait long without seeing even such tokens as these, let us not faint, let us not despair ; for we shall find at length that St. James spoke truly

when he said, "Blessed is the man who endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him."

Let us not however think, as probably St. Peter once did, that it is a light matter to be tempted. What bitter pangs he would have escaped if he had only attended to Our Lord's caution, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Our spirit may truly be ready as his was, but we must remember what he was not once perhaps disposed to admit, that the flesh is weak. Many, it is to be feared, whose love is not so strong as his, do not hesitate to go into temptation, though they daily with their lips ask God to keep them out of it.

Without, then, despising warnings and knowingly running against them like Balaam, let each one of us in this matter judge himself and abstain from condemning his brother, who from difference of position, education or feeling, may be in no wise blamable for doing what in our own case might be equivalent to entering into a certainly fatal temptation. Let every one seek to be fully persuaded in his own mind, remembering that "Whatever is not of faith is of sin."

"**DELIVER US FROM EVIL.**"—It is the opinion of some that the words here translated, "evil," would have been better rendered "the evil one." It may be so, though the point is by no means universally conceded; and it is one in which it is hardly necessary to come to a decision if it be true that every evil, temporal and

spiritual, man's ruin in body and soul, has followed the fatal temptation of our first parents by that murderer from the beginning, the father of lies, that old serpent, the Devil. It is much the same thing whether we pray to be delivered from him, or from the evil effected by him or his agents whether diabolical or human. But the Greek Testament certainly shows the word here used (*πονηρος*) in the sense of "wicked" oftener than of anything else. For instance we find it connected with the words, "men, fruit, heart, adulterous generation, eye, thought, servant, spirits, works, world," whilst in several places when without a noun as here, it undoubtedly does signify "*the evil one.*" And as I think the prayer for daily bread regards primarily our temporal needs, so I suppose that the petition we are now considering refers primarily to wickedness; its essence and its effects; lawless wickedness; which without God's interference would overpower us; for the word translated "deliver," means to "draw," to "snatch," to "rescue." There is none inherently "good" but One, that is God, and so we must apply to Him for His active aid to secure us against evil, for He is stronger than the wicked one. When drawn by Him from evil we are placed among the rescued ones on the Lord's side, and as long as we remain there the wicked one cannot touch us so as to hurt; there those are to be found who are snatched from the power of the Devil, delivered from every evil work. But we need not perhaps restrict our thoughts exclusively to spiritual matters in using this petition. When we ask for our daily bread we may well think

of the Bread of Life, and so here whilst praying against spiritual wickedness we may be permitted to ask also for deliverance from the afflictions of mind, body, and estate, which the malice of Satan or of man may bring upon us. But however this may be, God grant that at that solemn period when the time shall draw nigh that we must die, we may all be able to acknowledge with praise, in language similar to that of the tried old Patriarch going to his rest after a course distinguished by many crosses and great blessings, that God has fed us all our lives long, that His Angel, the Angel of His presence, has redeemed us from all evil!

We have now considered at more or less length all the petitions of this Divine Form; to be taken, as occasion may require, equally as the model or the manual for our devotions. We have hitherto looked at each of the clauses in detail; but a general observation or two applicable to all of them, collectively as well as individually, will not be out of place. I may indeed go so far as to say that our view must be incomplete if we fail to glance at Our Lord's instructions accompanying the committal of this Prayer to the disciples. These instructions are to be found in the Sermon on the Mount, and in the earlier part of the eleventh chapter of St. Luke; and in one particular, the absolute *necessity of our forgiving others*, they have already had our share of attention. But other things are insisted on by Our Lord to prevent our prayers being nugatory; and those are, *earnestness* or *importunity* in our petitions (Luke xi. 5, 8), *conscientious attention to the perform-*

ance of our relative duties, and finally, to crown the whole, *the exercise of faith in God.*

Though we read that after Christ had delivered the Sermon on the Mount the people were astonished at His doctrine, that wonderful discourse must be admitted to be of an order more practical than what in modern theological language would be termed doctrinal. Yet there is a faith the prime importance of which is very strongly taught there; a faith not so much involving a perfectly correct idea of the grounds of our justification before God, not so much an exact reception of the facts comprised in the finished work of Christ, as a *primary and simple faith in God, an unhesitating trust and confidence* in Our Heavenly Father. There may be many reasons which I need not stop to enumerate here, though one of them has been already noticed, why Our Lord Himself should not have spoken very fully to the Jews or even to His own disciples of the efficacy of saving faith in the sense in which St. Paul often uses the word. The faith so strongly inculcated in the Sermon on the Mount, though not once, or at least only in one-half negative word, directly mentioned there, is the faith that is written of in the Epistle of St. James, when he tells his brethren that if they *ask of God it shall be given them*, only that they must *ask in faith*, because the wavering (or doubting) man should receive nothing of the Lord. Without this kind of faith, or assurance of the efficacy of prayer, it is plain that the act of prayer would be a mere piece of folly, and nothing but a waste of time. "Ye shall receive,"

—"Ye shall find,"—"It shall be opened," were positive promises of Christ to those who followed certain specified directions. And St. James wrote in language as plain as words could make it, "It shall be given." We need not shrink then from putting to a practical test God's willingness to hear. To any reader, therefore, who may be earnestly desiring some good thing which can be honestly brought under the head of any of the seven petitions of the Lord's Prayer, I would propose provided he have a thankful heart, a sincere desire to serve God, and a readiness entirely to forgive his brother his trespasses, that he should with perseverance, reverent importunity, and faith, come with boldness to the Throne of Grace and ask God for what he is wishing,* whether with reference to temporal or spiritual matters. If he does this, my belief, based on Scripture and the experience of my own life hereto, is, that in very many cases (I think it will be scarcely presumptuous to say that in most cases) he will sooner or later obtain the very thing he asked for; but if not, and he has followed Our Lord's example by saying "Yet not my will but thine be done," he will receive some blessing that he will himself acknowledge to be quite as good as what he asked for, or even better. I shall not try to explain what can never be perfectly understood; what it is that constitutes the prevalence of the effectual fervent prayer of a man who regards

* I mean, of course, anything reasonable and possible, for I will not encourage infatuation.

not iniquity in his heart. I will not lose myself in speculating upon the action of prayer on the Divine Mind, or the supposed incompatibility of its influence with theories on the divine decrees. I will not exercise myself thus in things far too high for me, in mysteries which will be perhaps kept hid for ever. The efficacy of prayer offered to a loving Father in Heaven, cannot be more hard to believe than the responsibility of man in the sight of a God who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

We have directed our thoughts to whatever may strictly be called *prayer* in the Divine Form given us, and now come to the clause,—

“FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, FOR EVER AND EVER, AMEN.”—We may see that this is not to be found in St. Luke's Gospel, and many learned men hold that it is an interpolation in St. Matthew's. But whether it had actually the Divine stamp of Our Saviour's authorisation or not, it does certainly form a very fit ending for our petitions. Those who begin their supplications with a prayer for the coming of God's Kingdom, can feel no scruples in completing them with a doxology so lofty as this, so entirely in accordance with the spirit and language of the Lord's Prayer. This short ascription of praise that we are now so familiar with, is said to be a form that was once in use among the Jews, and there is no question that it made part of some very ancient Christian Liturgies. As we have now endeavoured to examine the Lord's Prayer from first to last with a

view to understand the meaning of the different parts, it may be as well to add here, that the researches of some who have studied Jewish usages and literature would lead us to conclude that every one of the petitions in it, save only that peculiarly Christian one that we may be forgiven *as* we forgive others, may be found amongst forms used by the Jews prior to Our Saviour's time. Suppose there is good ground for this conclusion, and I hardly see how we can take upon ourselves to deny it, is there the least reason on that account for our thinking at all lightly of the clauses of this prayer, always possessing, as they do, the stamp of Christ's Divine authority, and collected as they were into one form by His unerring wisdom? May we not the rather from this learn to follow Our Saviour's example in making full use and profit of whatever good thing we find ready to our hands, especially when by so doing we may the better secure the sympathies of those whom it is our object to edify or benefit? We never find that Jesus Christ resorted to the extraordinary powers at His command when His objects could be attained by means open to men in general; and even in His most marvellous works He used miraculous agency no longer or further than was necessary. The life that He restored to the sleeping daughter of Jairus was not sustained and strengthened without "something to be given her to eat." He did not disdain to bless and make use of a few loaves and small fishes when providing refreshment for some thousands of men besides women and children; and He ordered

that the burial-clothes should be loosed by human fingers from the feet of him who, having been in the grave four days, was brought out from thence by the call of Christ's almighty voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" It appears then to have been Our Lord's practice, in which He was followed by St. Paul (Acts xvii. 23 & 28, &c.), to use things as He found them as far as was suitable, and when they were really serviceable. In accommodation with the habits and ideas of his disciples, Christ not only gave them a form of prayer, but also allowed them apparently the continuance of some forms of human composition to which, perhaps, they were already in some measure accustomed. May not a lesson be derived from this even for our own days? Do we not sometimes now require to be cautioned against looking to violent change for success, and to be warned against undervaluing the works of good men of former times, more especially if these works have acquired any hold on the affections or feelings of the people whom we wish to benefit. These remarks may apply to the case of persons who on conscientious but I think wholly insufficient grounds leave the communion of our National Church. There are some who do so only because its worship consists of *forms* of prayer and praise, though they admit that in the contents of these forms there is nothing to object to but much to admire. But if He who was the Word of God, if He who created man's tongue, thought it not beneath Him to take up a few Jewish formularies, to mould them together and to breathe into them a breath of life, it is

difficult to discern anything contrary to reason, faith or Christian simplicity in our own grateful adherence to certain reasonable forms which we judge to be unassailable in Scripture truth and hard to match for genuine spirituality and Christian love. Can it be a vain repetition to join in thanksgivings and supplications such as those which have ascended in the same words towards Heaven from age to age, which have been the comfort of our forefathers, and may continue, we hope, to be ours and our children's—matchless expressions as they are of the wants of our feeble nature and of the praise of a Christian heart? But let us not fail to acknowledge as members of the Christian brotherhood, these pious men who leave the national communion from conscientious though mistaken scruples, thereby depriving themselves of many advantages for conscience sake; and let *them* cease to bring charges of insincerity against those who remain. Perhaps we may hardly dare to hope before the universal setting up of that Kingdom for which we daily pray, that an outward as well as spiritual association may conjoin in fellowship all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; yet one of the purposes amongst others of the divine composition we have been examining, would almost seem to have been to bring Christians together into one body, not only mystically before the Lord, but visibly in the eyes of the world, to the edification of all men. I trust, therefore, that what I have just said may not be considered wholly out of place here. Yet it is meet that our concluding reflections should spring

unequivocally from the great object we have been contemplating. Let us rejoice, then, that notwithstanding all differences and misrepresentations, small and great, amongst men, there does exist one thing which is the common possession of all the members of every Christian community—one form of words of universally recognised authority, which leads all men to look upward as creatures entirely dependent on the Great Being who is infinitely Mighty, Wise, and Good ; who is not far from any one of them ; whom every man, I suppose, at some time or other, more or less intelligently, believes in and feels after, because he finds the need of His help. Let us constantly and thoughtfully use as our own this Divine Prayer, which requires in us no antecedent doctrinal knowledge, being so plain that the child with his earliest lisping may use it ; which is at the same time so full of the deep things of God that no search can adequately measure it ; so comprehensive, that by its means the perfect man in Christ may express the spiritual and human wants and feelings of his full stature, and which leads us to regard with brotherly love all the children of God by what name soever they are called among men. Let us be thankful that by the good providence of God there always exists at least one bond of peace within which no Christian may refuse to be brought ; for to the end of time itself we have that elevating, consolatory, and truly catholic Prayer which teaches all of us harmoniously to say together, “OUR FATHER which art IN HEAVEN !”

II.

THOUGHTS ON THE PERSONAL AND SOCIAL POSITION AND QUALIFICATIONS OF THE FIRST PROPAGATORS OF CHRISTIANITY AMONGST THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD.

WE are often invited to admire the early and marvellous success which rewarded the labours of the first disciples of Christ, and to wonder at the very rapid and effectual progress made in the propagation of a new and unattractive form of religion, only recommended to the adoption of the world by the honest and artless persuasions, and the self-denying lives, of "a few poor ignorant fishermen." Through many an essay and sermon we are told in how miraculous a way the philosophy and superstitions of heathen Greece and Rome were overthrown by the preachings and writings of a small company of illiterate and despised Galileans. The time may have arrived to look a little closely into this matter, and to ascertain if there is any unquestionable authority for the statement that the first successful disseminators of the Gospel amongst the nations of the earth can be correctly described as "a

few poor ignorant fishermen," according to the meaning that would be given to such phraseology in the present day.

Without dispute the conquests of Christianity are wonderful enough, and a very fair argument may be deduced from them for the truths of our holy religion; but no good end can be attained by a misrepresentation of the agency by which it pleased God that they should be achieved.

In entering on this inquiry it may be interesting and also of some incidental use in our researches to try and find what light the Gospels will throw on the circumstances in life of Our blessed Lord himself, and of the honoured family from which it was ordained in the Divine decrees that He, according to the flesh, should spring.

On this and on other points which we may here investigate, tradition would come forward with the offer of many interesting particulars, some of which may very possibly be true; and tradition is not to be neglected when we have nothing better to help us. But rumour itself is scarcely less trustworthy than tradition. For as rumour, even when springing from real facts, may soon be turned into a false flight by a breath from the mouth of error, so tradition, though honourably transmitted at first, may soon pass into the deceitful hands of self-interest, amplification and credulity, and become quite improper for our confident acceptance. In my present inquiries I wish therefore to use only those sources of information which we

have the best reason to believe have continued pure and untainted. Throughout this paper, therefore, I intend to rely as exclusively as possible on facts which we learn from the New Testament itself.

“A Jewish peasant” seems to have become now-a-days a favourite and approved description of Our Lord Jesus Christ with reference to his worldly or social position through the time when He condescended to appear in our nature amongst men. I hardly know whether it is the best that might be chosen for truly representing the circumstances. We certainly know that Our Blessed Lord humbled Himself and “became *poor*,” and I believe that He chose to be *poor*, not only in comparison with His glorious state with the Father, wherein, as St. Paul tells us, He had been *rich*, but *poor* by voluntarily foregoing the temporal advantages of wealth and station which He might, had He been so minded, have secured for Himself here. And not only so, but in giving up in a special manner the last few years of His blessed life on earth for our sakes, He abandoned what we might in ordinary language call all His worldly means and prospects. Without intending for a moment to suggest that He was ever rich in the same sense that the young man was who once came running to Him, we may say that after beginning to preach the Kingdom of God He became *poor* as that young ruler would have become had he sold all his great possessions, distributed the proceeds to the needy, and turned to follow Christ. And Our Lord no doubt condescended to be ministered

unto of the substance of those affectionate friends of his whose active personal service in preaching had not been called for, and who therefore had received no command to dispossess themselves of their wealth. We may suppose that He practised Himself what he enjoined on the twelve and the seventy when He sent them to many cities and places in Israel, entering into the house of a worthy inhabitant where His ministrations took Him, abiding there till He left those parts, and eating and drinking such things as were set before Him; living, that is, as a familiar guest of those whom He went about to teach and to save whether rich or poor, partaking of their usual fare whether dainty or homely, the latter probably oftener than the former. For though He readily accepted the genuine hospitality and sometimes declined not the more formal invitations of the wealthy, and though they in several notable instances received His doctrines, yet it seems to have been to the poor more especially that the Gospel was preached. But I look in vain to the Evangelists' narratives for proofs of Our Lord's poverty in the sense of anything approaching to want or destitution. We may notice however a few circumstances from which the popular belief seems to have sprung.

It is true that Our Lord when born was laid in a manger or stall, or whatever else the word *φάτνη* may precisely mean; but this is no complete proof of the poverty of the parents, for we are expressly told it was because there was *no room* for them in the inn. It is not said they were unable to pay for accommodation;

they only came too late to procure it. It has indeed been considered a mark of poverty, that Mary brought a sacrifice of "a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons," on her purification; but St. Luke does not even allude to the law demanding a lamb on such an occasion from the rich. It is possible therefore that the more costly offering was but seldom presented or only perhaps by the very wealthy. It is true that in the course of the sacred history, Joseph is once called in St. Matthew, and Our Lord once in St. Mark,* the "carpenter;" but in the earlier part of the narrative Joseph is introduced only as "a just man," and "Son of David," "a man of the house of David," and the word τέκτων may mean *a planner, an author, a contriver, an artisan, a builder, or a carpenter* as it is, perhaps correctly, translated in our version. Whether Joseph was of this trade at the first, or whether he took it up after his marriage with Mary, we are not told, but it is no proof of great poverty to be engaged in a respectable business. There is no hint that the reputed father had the least difficulty in finding means for travelling to Egypt and residing there for some time with his family; for moving from place to place when warned by God, and afterwards for not only going himself according to the law but for taking his wife every year from Galilee to Jerusalem. From the age of twelve to that of thirty Our Lord passed a period

* "Is not this the carpenter?" was an expression probably of contempt for a teacher not brought up to the office by regular rabbinical training.

respecting which it has seemed good to the Holy Ghost to reveal very little to us, for it is more important that we should study the character of Our Saviour as Prophet, Priest and King, than that we should curiously exercise ourselves in a vain endeavour to "know Christ after the flesh;"* but from the very remarkable earnestness which He once showed in His childhood for the acquisition of knowledge, it is not likely that He allowed the next eighteen years of His most holy life to pass without studious and continual efforts to qualify Himself in every way for "His Father's business." As it was by ordinary means and in the ordinary course of nature that His body "increased in stature,"† we may infer that also without miraculous interposition His mind "increased in wisdom." He who at the age of twelve astonished His friends by seizing a favourable moment for availing Himself of the instruction of "the Doctors," and for making use of their stores of information, would seek every means of acquiring that learning and knowledge which the Holy Ghost, given to Him without measure, would enable Him to employ at the age of thirty in meeting with readiness the subtleties of the Scribes, and in delivering with divine eloquence those wonderful parables and discourses which caused the exclamation: "Never man spake like this man." Some learned persons mighty in the Scriptures give what they consider very good reasons for believing that the

* 2 Cor. v. 16.

† Is. vii. 15.

James who wrote the Epistle in the sacred canon was really the brother of Our Lord, a son of Joseph and Mary. This James must, for a Jew, have had extraordinary opportunities for study; for the style of his Epistle is stated to be "fresh and vivid, and rich in graphic figure," the language purer Greek than found in most of the sacred writings and more free from Hebraisms. If this James was really the brother of Our Lord, and if circumstances afforded him time and opportunity for the successful study of a foreign language, it is reasonable to suppose that Our Lord would have had similar opportunity;* and why should we think it would be wasted by Him who said even of a few broken victuals: "Gather up the fragments that nothing be lost?" It is true that some Jews are represented as marvelling and saying once: "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" And some people infer from this that Our Lord had not had the advantage of any mental culture. But in the first place it is evident, from other circumstances, that the Jews of Jerusalem knew very little of Our Lord's history or origin; and next, it seems to me that the question proves that they were deeply impressed with the signs of learning not obscurely exhibited in Our Lord's teaching. I believe that their words, "never having learned," only mean that Jesus had never placed Himself as a pupil under any of their celebrated

* "Galilee of the Gentiles" was a district in which were numerous foreigners, many of whom would speak, and probably would teach, Greek.

Rabbis, as Paul for instance had, when at the feet of Gamaliel. It is true also that "the Son of Man" once said that He had "nowhere to lay His head." I think this could not mean that if He had chosen to continue in the place where He was brought up He would really have been too poor to afford Himself a proper or convenient lodging, but only that having now taken up His work, and entered upon the course of going about doing good and of preaching in the cities and villages of the land, He had *no fixed place of residence*; He and his followers had given up that comfort; they knew not, as it were, on the morning, when they rose, where they should rest at night. It should be observed also that these well-known words were spoken "in the way" to Jerusalem, on his journey just before he should "be received up," and during which he "sent messengers before his face." * The person who offered to attend Him may probably have thought that Our Lord was now going to establish His kingdom in the Holy City; but he was warned that a follower of Christ must still be prepared for a life of hardship and toil, and be ready to take whatever friendly shelter might be available night after night. It is true also that Our Lord directed Peter how to obtain the "piece of money," the "stater," for tribute from himself and Peter to the Temple; and that many persons have thought from this that there was not so much money to be raised from their united resources. It may be so, and unexpected emer-

* Luke ix. 51 & 57.

gencies may happen to any one, even to the richest; but I think that the point of the narration is not to show us that Our Lord and his disciple were in a state of great penury, but that Peter had acted incautiously in committing his Master to pay this tribute; for that the Lord of All, the Son of the Great King, must not pay tribute. Nevertheless, as Peter had pledged himself, and lest offence should be given, he was told how by very little trouble he might himself earn what, with injudicious haste, he had taken upon himself to promise for his Master (who from his Sonship could not immediately give it), and enough for his own tribute also. Again, it is true that at a marriage feast of some friends of Our Lord's, they after a time "wanted wine," and this is supposed to be a proof of that his connections were poor. They may have been; but I do not think that this circumstance decides the question, for it may happen to any one however wealthy, who is entertaining a large number of guests, to find suddenly that the supply of some particular luxury or provision falls short; and it is very possible that though Our Lord's disciples had been asked to the wedding, He brought in his train a larger number than had been expected.* It is true that when a sword had indeed pierced the heart of his weeping mother, Our Lord from the Cross commended her to the care of his beloved disciple.

* Most people must have seen pictures, all absurd, no doubt, in conception, but one at least magnificent in execution, representing the feast at Cana as a scene of princely splendour.

But this proves no more perhaps than the thoughtful wish of the Divine Sufferer to provide for her the affectionate solace that her condition would need. It seems almost certain that Joseph was then dead, and the Gospels show us occasionally what extortion and oppression unfriended widows were subject to in those violent times. Our Lord's brethren could not adequately sympathise with her, as they do not seem to have fully believed in Him up to his crucifixion, though they did so very soon after.

I think I have noticed all the facts that are usually supposed to show the poverty of Our Lord and his earthly relatives. There are other circumstances, such as Joseph's royal descent, and the relationship of the Virgin Mary to Elizabeth, of the daughters of Aaron, wife of Zacharias the priest, which give a contrary impression; and we may find further particulars which seem to indicate that even after Our Lord in His infinite love, and His immediate followers for His sake, had abandoned worldly possessions and advantages, they were not by any means ordinarily without resources for obtaining an adequate supply of the necessities of life.

The little company of whom Our Lord was the Master had a "bag," and we never read of its being insufficiently filled. Its contents seem always to have been enough for ordinary wants, and also for the bestowal of gifts on the poor. And more than this, they excited the cupidity of Judas. We read that the disciples, when near Samaria, went to *buy* meat. Afterwards,

too, the eleven thought that Jesus had said to the traitor, "*Buy* those things that we have need of against the feast." And even in a case of such magnitude as that of feeding a multitude, the disciples did not object before the miracle that they could not afford to entertain the numbers collected. On one occasion, St. Luke tells us, they said, "We have no more but five loaves and two fishes, *except we should* go and *buy* meat for all the people." And on the other occasion they asked, according to St. Mark, "From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread *here in the wilderness?*" Both questions may be read as indicating not that the cost was beyond their means, but that no amount of money in that spot would procure what was wanted.

And we should not forget that Our Lord in the days of His flesh was not without loving acquaintances and friends of consideration and wealth, who would naturally care for His wants and for those of His followers. The family of Bethany with whom He was peculiarly intimate must have belonged to an upper class of the Jews, amongst whom Lazarus, Martha, and Mary, seem to have been greatly respected; for many of *the Jews*, a term often applied in St. John to the ruling class, came to comfort the sisters in their great trouble; and Mary's "very costly" offering would seem to have required a donor of some wealth. Christ also numbered among his friends such men as Nicodemus, "a ruler of the Jews;" Joseph, the "rich man of Arimathea;" Zaccheus, "who was rich." And certain

women who befriended Him, including the wife of Herod's steward, we are plainly given to understand were persons of substance.

It may be noted, too, that on occasion of a great entertainment, to which it appears from the context that "the poor" were not called,* Our Lord was not considered of too low a station to be invited to the house of one of the chief Pharisees.

And as all parts of the Scriptures were written for our learning, I trust it may not be deemed irreverent in me to speak even of Our Saviour's vesture or garments, which appear to have been of a value that excited more than usual attention among the soldiers on guard at the Crucifixion. The "coat," or *tunic*, in particular, seems to have been of the kind worn by the High Priest, and is supposed by some who have given attention to such matters to have been made of "costly stuff."

Nothing can be further from my wishes than to qualify our sense of the sufferings and humiliation of Our Blessed Lord, but there can be no good object in representing them as other than they really were. And if we gain our information on these points from the New Testament only, I question whether, on the whole, we are warranted in considering that great poverty or personal destitution were amongst the ingre-

* Since the above was written I have found that the present Archbishop of Dublin remarks in one of his works that this was probably "a splendid entertainment," and the guests "distinguished persons."

dients of the bitter cup which for our sakes He drank to its dregs.

Passing now from this incidental question, we may commence our main inquiry by examining how far the Scriptures justify our calling even the immediate disciples of Our Lord, I mean the original twelve who were his personal followers, "poor illiterate fishermen." Some of the remarks already made respecting Our Lord's condition here would apply equally to this part of the subject. They need not be repeated, therefore, in the otherwise general notice it may be as well to take of the circumstances of the Apostles from the date of the earliest events related in their history by the Evangelists.

First we learn that John the Baptist in the presence of two of his own disciples pointed out Jesus as "the Lamb of God;" and that those two men, upon hearing that exclamation, "followed Jesus;" ANDREW of Bethsaida was one of them, and he found his own brother, Simon—surnamed soon after PETER—and brought him to Jesus. If any of the Apostles were actually and actively *fishermen*, no doubt Andrew and Peter were so. In Matthew we read, "they were fishers," they were "casting a net into the sea." In Luke, Simon says, "we have toiled all the night." It seems also from St. Luke's account that JAMES and JOHN were partners with Simon. The business occupation then of the four men, Andrew, Peter, James, and John, was undoubtedly that of fishing. I do not know that any other of the original Apostles are expressly called

fishermen. Most certainly all of them were not so, but, besides those already mentioned, several if not ordinarily of that occupation were at least capable of what we should call "lending a hand" in a fishing expedition, as we learn from John xxi. Respecting the four disciples then whom we may, without doubt, call "fishermen," we have to see whether we are justified in also calling them "poor" and "illiterate;" and we shall at a subsequent period have to examine what part they are said to have taken in the work of spreading the Gospel in the world. Andrew, we have seen, was a disciple of John the Baptist before being called to follow Christ, and there are some reasons for thinking that the other disciple of the Baptist referred to in connection with Andrew was the Apostle John. The Baptist himself was the son of a priest. A person of his birth must have had opportunities of receiving what the Jews would consider a good education. It is true that it is said that he "was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel," but he may have had means of instruction there, and it is not likely that a man of his energy would pass thirty years of his life in mental idleness. If not taught much by others, he found ways to teach himself; and we are expressly told that he "waxed strong in spirit." It is certain that even Priests and Levites went to consult him, and when he reproved the Pharisees they did not taunt him for want of education. He was not one who would leave his disciples without instruction. Disciples in fact according to the meaning of the word are learners, and

we do find by Gospel history that "John taught his disciples." It is not reasonable then to call those who had left him to follow Jesus, "ignorant persons," for they must have been men of disciplined minds.

Of the worldly circumstances of Andrew and his brother Peter we may form some little judgment by noticing the fact that Peter was "partner" (Luke v. 10) with the sons of Zebedee, and that Zebedee and his sons had sufficient wealth to employ the services of *hired servants* in their vessel (Mark i. 20). The four disciples then already named can hardly have been in the position of those whom we should now call "*poor fishermen*." We may rather say they were men of respectability, deriving their means from the fishing trade. Some learned men affirm that the style and language of St. John's Gospel prove that he was a man of cultivated mind. It is evident that though he had much of the Hebrew spirit, he was acquainted with some of the theories of philosophical theology. Salome, the mother of this Evangelist and of the disciple James was a person of property, for she was one of the good women who ministered unto the Lord of their substance, and one of those who "brought sweet spices that they might come and anoint" the Lord's body. We may note, too, that her son John was an acquaintance of the High Priest's, and on such terms with him that he was not only able to enter his house, but to exercise sufficient influence there to procure the admission of Peter also. And we may ask if it is likely that Our Lord would have committed his own venerable

and blessed mother to the care of John unless this beloved disciple had the means of taking her to a home of some respectability and comfort? With respect to Andrew and Peter, from the notice of them in John i., we should rather look on them as earnest thoughtful men, with minds occupied by the teaching of the Baptist, and the prophecies of the Messiah. They even took time to consider deliberately the call they received from Christ, for they returned to their avocations before finally forsaking all to follow Him. When Peter afterwards referred to that "*all*" as something worth reminding Our Saviour of, he was neither rebuked nor told that it was little or nothing. He was, indeed, partner, not only in the ships and business of James and John, but in their ambition also. "What shall we have therefore?" said Peter. "Grant that we may sit, one on thy right hand and the other on thy left hand in thy glory," said the sons of Zebedee. Peter was also their partner in self-sufficiency—"Although all shall be offended yet will not I," said he. "We can drink of thy cup—we can be baptised with thy baptism," said they. We must not indeed think that John was the sleepy sentimental figure which painters like to depict in portraying the beloved disciple. He was one of the two "Boanerges, the sons of thunder," who would have commanded fire to come down from heaven to consume a few Samaritan villages because they did not receive the great Jewish Teacher who was bound for Jerusalem. It remains that I should notice the expression, "unlearned and ignorant

men," applied by the High Priest, the rulers, elders and scribes to Peter and John (Acts iv. 13). I think the context should lead us to understand that the two Apostles showed great aptitude for teaching, and such knowledge of the Scriptures as caused their persecutors to marvel how men who had not been brought up as teachers, and how Peter especially, whose provincial accent proved that he had not studied under the Doctors of Jerusalem, could have acquired their extraordinary qualifications. The judges were forced at last to recollect that their undaunted prisoners had had the advantage of continually listening to the doctrine of Him who taught something better than the worthless traditions of the scribes, and spoke "as one having authority in Himself." I may add, in illustration of the condition of "the fishermen," that Andrew and Peter were of Bethsaida, a place on the extreme north of the Sea of Tiberias (John i. 44); and yet their circumstances allowed them both means and leisure to attend the ministrations of the Baptist (Andrew being one of his stated disciples), at Bethabara, or Bethany, which, whether near Cœnan, or close to the Dead Sea, where Jordan enters it, was certainly at a distance from their fishing establishment great enough to preclude their following for a time their worldly occupation.

There are two other disciples expressly named in John xxi. 2, as having been ready to "go a fishing" with Peter, though I do not find that they were actually called "fishermen." NATHANAEL of Cana in Galilee

(generally supposed to be the disciple elsewhere named Bartholomew), and THOMAS "called Didymus." Nathanael we know to have been a thoughtful person, who had studied Moses in the law, and the prophets ; a man of great moral worth : and he, like Andrew and Peter, had time to devote to deep meditation, after attendance probably on the instructions of the Baptist, at a considerable distance from his home. Thomas was a person of generous impulse, strong determination (John xi. 16, xx. 19 and 24) and inquiring mind (xiv. 5). He was a man not to be convinced of a fact without the clearest possible evidence, but as soon as convinced was foremost in hearty candour, a quality which at length drew from him a nobler and more explicit avowal of the divinity of the risen Lord than any that his more pliant fellow-disciples had made.

Of the lists of Christ's first Apostles, the only names not yet spoken of respecting whom we have any particulars whatever are PHILIP, MATTHEW, JUDAS the brother of James, and JUDAS the traitor. It will not help our purpose to stop here to inquire if the history and character of the last are correctly understood in general. Suffice it to say that this wretched man seems to have been a native of Kerioth, a place in Judæa. Philip appears to have been a person of some leisure like Andrew and Peter, and of inquiring mind like Thomas. His name was a Greek one, and he seems, from the interesting circumstance mentioned in John xii., to have had some acquaintance among the Greeks or Gentiles. All we hear of Judas (not Iscariot) is that

he once put an important question to Our Lord. Matthew certainly was no "fisherman." We are plainly told that he was a "publican." We know from the case of Zaccheus that there were some rich men of this class. We find accordingly that Matthew (or Levi) had the means "in his own house" of affording Our Lord "a great feast," to which "a great company sat down."

Thus far of the original "Twelve" chosen by the Lord Himself. He also sent about the land seventy other disciples, of whose names and occupations we have no account whatever.

But by the gracious pleasure of God we have an inspired history which specially treats of the work of the early labourers in the Christian Church, and we may reasonably expect to find therein the names of those who were successfully employed in disseminating the Gospel of Christ after His ascension. It is a most remarkable fact that after simply giving a list of the first Apostles in the opening chapter of the Acts, St. Luke never once refers to any of them except Peter and John and James, but introduces soon an entirely new set, an agency of quite a different order. We must all agree that God chooses the best means to accomplish His purposes, and we can understand how, although but "poor fishermen," which I cannot at all fully admit, the first Apostles might have been very proper persons even according to our ideas for the only work we read in the Bible that any

of them except two or three were ever employed upon—the work of going about in couples amongst the neglected people of the land of Israel, the poor flock that had no shepherd, to proclaim that the Kingdom of God was at hand; to heal the sick and to cast out devils in Christ's time, and afterwards to serve amongst the Jews as "witnesses to His resurrection;" to act as general overseers of the Church, and to impart spiritual gifts by the laying on of hands. And if we make a list in the order presented in the Acts of the persons indicated by St. Luke as the real disseminators of Christianity, we shall find their names or description to be as follows:

Peter,	Judas (Barsabas),
John,	Silas (Silvanus ?),
Stephen,	Timotheus,
Philip (not the Apostle),	Aquila and Priscilla,
Paul,	Apollos,
Men of Cyprus and Cyrene,	Sopater,
Barnabas,	Aristarchus,
John Mark,	Secundus,
Simeon (Niger),	Gaius,
Lucius, of Cyrene,	Tychicus,
Manaen,	Trophimus.

Let anyone look at the above list and say whether there is the very least reason for supposing that it includes any "fishermen" at all besides the two first named. But we will go through it in order. Of Peter and John we have already discussed the circumstances, and have seen enough to make us believe that though

fishermen they were neither "poor" nor "ignorant" when called by Christ to forsake all and follow Him. Peter was indeed the first great preacher of the Gospel after the descent of the Holy Ghost, and, as such, the Rock on which the Church was built. We may truly say of this striking character that he was one of a thousand—one of those extraordinary men who from any position in life may be the instruments of effecting the most important changes or revolutions. There are few books, if any, where shades of character and touches of individuality are so finely marked as in the Bible, and the particulars respecting the first great Apostle of the Jewish Church which the Evangelists delight to give us, with a copiousness not accorded in their notices of other Apostles, reveal to us an affectionate, forward, ready, impulsive nature, fitting him to take a prominent part in a movement where feeling and conviction were combined. Of the Apostle John, we are only told in the Acts that he accompanied Peter in his early ministrations and trials: nothing whatever is recorded of him as a preacher, and he soon disappears altogether from the history. Peter seems to have been employed in founding the Gentile as well as the Jewish Church, and in assisting to preserve the Gentile edifice from the painful injuries that early bigotry would have inflicted on it; but it was not in Peter that the Lord "wrought mightily to the nations" (Gal. ii. 8), and after the fifteenth chapter the name occurs in Acts no more.

The first fresh name on the list is that of STEPHEN,

one of the seven Hellenist deacons. The *Hellenists*, translated *Grecians* in Acts vi. 1, were Jews born in Gentile countries where Greek was the ordinary language; or Jews born in their own land who from connection or other causes ordinarily spoke in Greek. The names of the seven deacons are all Greek, but it is very evident from Acts vii. 2, that Stephen was a real Jew by descent. It would appear from his speech that he was a man of much ability, and as he was chosen to superintend a difficult administration, we may suppose he was a capable and experienced man in secular affairs. The "great wonders and miracles which he did," and "the wisdom and spirit by which he spake," must have been largely instrumental in furthering the establishment of the true religion. Certain classes amongst the Jews were so irritated by his success as to be unable to restrain their violence; and thus this holy and faithful man became the first of the noble army of Christian Martyrs. I am aware of no reason for concluding that this eminent Hellenist was "poor," "illiterate," or "a fisherman."

We next come to another Hellenist to whom the last remark will also apply, PHILIP the Evangelist, one of the seven deacons (not Philip the Apostle). His baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch almost makes one doubt whether Peter can be correctly described as the founder of the Gentile Church. The pious officer of Queen Candace must however have been already a proselyte to the Jews' religion, as he had come to Jerusalem expressly to worship; even if he were not indeed a Jew taken

into favour in the Ethiopian court. And though Cornelius, Peter's Gentile trophy, might have been a proselyte, which is doubtful, it is all but purely certain that some of his friends baptised with him were Gentiles. Philip very successfully preached the Gospel in Samaria, and in the cities between Ashdod and Cæsarea. He seems afterwards to have settled in Cæsarea, as he had there a very hospitable "house" and "four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy."

Our list now brings us to the great man who was specially "ordained a preacher and an Apostle, a *teacher of the nations*" (1 Tim. ii. 7), and who beyond all question laboured more abundantly than all his fellow Apostles in the propagation of the Christian faith, and so successfully that he could say, in the strong language he sometimes used, that "the Gospel whereof he was made a Minister was preached to every creature under heaven." So far from being a poor fisherman of Galilee, Saul or PAUL, as everyone knows, was a native of Tarsus, a large city in Asia Minor, the capital of Cilicia, a province of the Roman Empire. This city, Tarsus, contained schools of philosophy and produced many learned men. The arts were greatly cultivated therein. Interesting curiosities and fragments brought from its remains are copious enough in some museums. Let us look at the circumstances and qualifications of the man who was specially set apart by God as "a chosen vessel unto Him to bear his name *before nations and Kings* and the children of Israel."

1. He received the Gospel, and his commission and

apostleship, not from any of the Galilean Apostles, but immediately from Christ Himself. Even the first pillars of the Church added nothing to him, but simply agreed that he should go to the nations whilst they continued their ministrations to the circumcision.

2. Though a Jew of the purest descent, he was a Roman citizen.

3. So far from being of mean position, he was before his conversion a Pharisee of the Pharisees, and, as some men think almost certain, though I must consider it doubtful myself, a member even of the highest Jewish Court, the Sanhedrim.* We find, indeed, that after he had suffered the loss of all things for Christ, he wrought as a tent-maker with his own hands for his livelihood; but this only proves that in his education the maxims of the Rabbis had been duly attended to, who taught that no one should be brought up without learning some useful trade. It may be incidentally remarked that some have thought this avocation may have brought him into contact with military men, and have given him that knowledge of warlike implements and habits which he turned to such good account in his writings.

4. So far from being illiterate, he must have been an accomplished scholar in the learning most esteemed by the Jews, and must also have had a fair knowledge of secular and classical or Greek literature.

My first assertion under this head is proved by his

* The question turns on the precise meaning of *κατήνευκα ψῆφον*, Acts xxvi. 10.

own words: "I was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers." The teacher he names is understood to have been the celebrated Gamaliel, a very learned and wise doctor, held in great reputation with the Jews.

His attainments in general literature and philosophy we might almost assume from our knowledge of his eager, ardent character, always urging him forward in every pursuit, and of the opportunities which must have offered themselves in such a seat of learning as Tarsus was. I do not wish to describe Paul as the accomplished paragon which some persons delight to make of him, but his quotations of Greek poets sufficiently prove that he was acquainted with classical literature. Festus alluded to his "much learning." And even when "ready to be offered" and when "the time of his departure was at hand," "such an one as Paul the aged" included a request to his "dearly beloved son Timothy," in an inspired epistle, to bring him "the books and specially the parchments." Of his own eloquence and powers in preaching he does not himself speak highly, but there is great pathos and force in some of his recorded speeches, and his epistles exhibit a few of the finest and most vigorous passages which can be found in any compositions. The occasionally involved and inconsequential style that must be remarked in some places is such as might be expected to result from his ardour and the apparent haste with which he wrote or dictated. Something similar, it is said, may be observed in Greek writers of great repu-

tation. If but the meaning could be made clear, the construction was not always required to be so perfect amongst the ancients as we now like to see it.

5. He was a man who distinguished himself in everything he took in hand, and soon acquired ascendancy in whatever position he might be found. He was at first "zealous" toward God, concerning "zeal," persecuting the Church; touching the righteousness which is in the law "blameless;" "beyond measure" he persecuted the Church; he profited in the Jews' religion "above many his equals;" he was "more exceedingly zealous" of the traditions of his fathers; and after his great change he "*pressed*" toward the mark for his prize, and he "counted all things but *dung*" that he might "win" Christ. In the Christian Church he supposes he was "not a whit behind the very chiefest Apostles," and how he commanded the affections of those with whom he laboured we see from various parts of the Acts and Epistles. Even when a persecuted prisoner, charged contemptuously with being a ringleader of a despised set of Nazareens, he secured the esteem of a Roman officer, and became virtual commander on board a ship containing, soldiers and crew, prisoners and passengers, two hundred and seventy-six souls.

I have no intention of giving Paul's history, so it is needless to say more here of that great character—of the man to whom the Lord said in the Temple of the Holy City, "Depart, for I will send thee *far hence to the nations.*"

Coming next in order are some persons whose names

are not even mentioned to us, but whose actions were most important and significant. In Acts xi. 19, 20, we have a very remarkable statement to the effect that the Christians scattered after the persecution about Stephen had "travelled as far as Phenice and Cyprus and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto Jews only," but that some of them who "were MEN OF CYPRUS AND CYRENE," "spake unto the Grecians" at Antioch, "preaching the Lord Jesus." Some of the most eminent commentators feel certain that the word *Grecians* (here employed in our version) does not mean *Hellenists* (Ἑλληνιστὰς, Hellenistic Jews), but *Greeks* (Ἕλληνας, pure Gentiles), who had not been proselytes to the Jews' religion; and the narrative certainly seems to carry that meaning. It is not unlikely that this important event may have preceded the preaching of Peter to Cornelius and his Italian friends, but whether it were so or not, the affair of Peter and Cornelius was still in Palestine, whilst the preaching of these nameless Evangelists was in parts beyond the sacred limits; an aggressive act, the very first advance made by the forces of Christianity in the conquest of the world. Those who thus led the van of the army which is still conquering and yet to conquer—for its victories are not yet complete—were certainly not poor fishermen of Galilee, for they were "*men* (ἄνδρες) of Cyprus and Cyrene."

We next hear of the exhortations of BARNABAS. This "good man," this "son of consolation," was sent forth by the Church in Jerusalem to examine the re-

markable circumstance just alluded to. Being himself (not a Galilean but) a Levite of *Cyprus*, he was particularly fitted for the mission. He soon became so eminent as to be called an "Apostle." He was especially selected to accompany Paul in his earlier journeyings, and boldly joined him in solemnly denouncing the contradicting Jews, by saying to them, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles." On separating from Paul he went to preach not in Judea but in Cyprus. He could not originally have been a "poor" man; for he had land, sold it, and laid the money at the Apostles' feet.

We next find mentioned as one who served in the work of evangelising the nations, JOHN WHOSE SURNAME WAS MARK. This man, though he even departed from the work, was not despaired of by "the Son of Consolation," and became in the end a very useful and most attached assistant of St. Paul and also of St. Peter; and Paul in his old age said, "He is profitable to me for the ministry." He was a nephew of Barnabas whose originally wealthy circumstances we have just noticed, and son of a woman who possessed a house in or near Jerusalem, so large that it was capable of accommodating "many" who "were gathered together praying" therein, at the time of Peter's imprisonment by Herod. It is not likely therefore that he was "poor"; and as his uncle was of Cyprus and his mother of Jerusalem, he could hardly have been a "Galilean fisherman."

We next read of "certain prophets and teachers in the Church that was at Antioch," namely (besides

Barnabas and Saul), "SIMEON that was called NIGER, and LUCIUS of Cyrene, and MANAEN which had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch." Of this Simeon we do not read elsewhere, but he is more likely to have been an African than a Galilean. Lucius was probably a kinsman of St. Paul (see Rom. xvi. 21). Manaen was the foster-brother of one of the Herods, and may perhaps have been his schoolfellow or companion in youth, or a member of his court in mature life.

Next are mentioned "chosen men," sent with Paul and Barnabas with a letter of consolation to the believing Gentiles; namely, "JUDAS surnamed BARNABAS and SILAS, chief men among the brethren." We learn soon after that these men were both "prophets," but of this Judas we hear no more. Silas, probably the Silvanus mentioned in the 1 Cor., 1 Thess., and 1 Peter, appears to have been a Roman citizen. How faithfully he shared St. Paul's labours and persecutions all readers of the Acts must well recollect. There is not the least reason I know of for supposing this active Evangeliser, who was of sufficient eminence to be associated by St. Paul with himself in some of his Epistles, to have ever been a poor Jewish fisherman.

The next on our list is TIMOTHEUS, whose mother was a "Jewess, but his father a Greek." His mother and grandmother too seem to have had Greek and not Jewish names, and it is certain that Timotheus was not under the Jewish covenant when St. Paul first knew him. He had however been well instructed by the pious Lois and Eunice in the Holy Scriptures. He

became an affectionate companion of St Paul, who at times dispatched him on important journeys of inquiry into the state of some of the Christian communities. He superintended for a period the Church of Ephesus; and the aged Apostle seems very earnestly to have desired to see this beloved son of his before approaching death should end his last imprisonment at Rome. This well-taught and faithful coadjutor of St. Paul's, a native of Derbe or Lystra, could certainly have been no "ignorant fisherman."*

The names of AQUILA and PRISCILLA next appear in the list of those who served towards spreading the Gospel in the world; and instruments of very great and signal service did they become when "they took unto them Apollos, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" than he had before heard it from "knowing only the baptism of John." Aquila was a Jew of Pontus, who had lived at Rome, and whose calling, like St. Paul's, was that of a tent-maker. From what is said in other places respecting this united and self-denying couple, they seem to have moved

* I may just state, that it has been thought by some that those mentioned by St. Paul, as sending affectionate greeting from Rome, in 2 Tim. iv. 21, were distinguished Gentiles whom Timothy himself had been the means of bringing to the faith. I have read that some curious things have come to light recently, which, when combined, seem to give grounds for identifying *Pudens* with a man of rank of that name, a successful Roman soldier, of the usual immoral Roman life before his conversion, and *Claudia* with a beautiful British princess who became the wife of Pudens. There can be scarcely a doubt that the *Linus* mentioned in the same verse was the first Bishop of Rome—Bishop even in the lifetime of St. Peter.

about, in the exercise of their calling, between Ephesus, Corinth and Rome. From the mention of "the church in their house" (Rom. xvi. 5) we should judge that they met with good success in their profession, or that they had private means of their own, and that their establishment was a large one. So well did they ever employ their opportunities of showing their Christian benevolence that St. Paul called them his "helpers in Christ Jesus," and sent them the thanks, not only of himself, but also of "all the Churches of the Gentiles." It is a thing to be noted that the names of this admirable couple always appear linked together. Aquila without his good wife, is not once mentioned in Scripture. On two occasions, indeed, St. Paul puts the female name first; perhaps, therefore, the charms of Priscilla's conversation, her graceful feminine tact and companionable manners may have gone as far, at least, in recommending the Gospel as her husband's strong sense and honest faith.

Next appears in the book of the Acts of the Apostles that distinguished and energetic man APOLLOS. This eminent preacher, whose name was of sufficient importance to become the watchword of a great party in the Church (in the same way as the names of the two greatest Apostles and that of Christ Himself were used by three other divisions) was, as we are told by St. Luke, a Jew of Alexandria, an eloquent man—mighty in the Scriptures—instructed in the way of the Lord—fervent in the Spirit—a diligent speaker and teacher. He was all this before taken in hand by Aquila and Priscilla at

Ephesus. He then in Achaia "helped them much which had believed through grace, for he mightily convinced the Jews and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus is Christ." He remained at Corinth while Paul passed through other parts and preached at Ephesus. Thus was he found worthy to water what Paul had planted. Some places however besides Corinth had the benefit of his ministrations, for he was not there when Paul wrote his first Epistle to the Corinthians from Ephesus. From what is mentioned in 1 Cor. xvi. 12, he seems to have been sufficiently independent of the Apostle to exercise a distinct judgment of his own. He probably feared that if he acceded to Paul's request about revisiting the Corinthians at that time, they might exalt his ministrations to the prejudice of the Apostle's own reputation and influence. He hardly seems to have been one of Paul's subordinates, or at all events so much under his personal management as the other preachers mentioned by St. Luke, after his account of Paul's formal visit to the Apostles and elders at Jerusalem. It was thought by Luther, and it is still thought by some learned men of the present day, that Apollos and not Paul was the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The authorship of that portion of the Scriptures is a question that will perhaps never be settled here below to the perfect satisfaction of all. However that may be, it can hardly be denied that it is the part that most particularly abounds in arguments in support of Christianity and in proofs of its truth. The other Epistles combat distinct errors,

or edify the church, or settle the affairs of certain communities. But "Hebrews" is a more regular treatise, constructed on the foundation of the ancient Scriptures, and is calculated, if anything could do so, to alleviate the disappointment we feel that Our risen Saviour's words were not recorded when "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded," in the way to Emmaus, "in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." That Apollos had one great qualification for writing such an Epistle as "Hebrews" we know from its being told us that "he mightily convinced the Jews, *showing by the Scriptures* that Jesus was Christ."

Six companions of St. Paul are afterwards mentioned in the Acts, who, it must be supposed, aided him in his evangelising labours—indeed we know such to have been the case with respect to one or two of them. They all bore Gentile names and were natives of Gentile lands. SOPATER of Berea; ARISTARCHUS* and SECUNDUS, Thessalonians; GAIUS of Derbe, a well-beloved and most hospitable man; TYCHICUS and TROPHIMUS of Asia, the former a "faithful minister in the Lord," the latter the innocent means of bringing about Paul's arrest in the Temple at Jerusalem.† There is

* Aristarchus, though expressly called "a Macedonian of Thessalonica," must I suppose have been a Jewish proselyte before he became a Christian, as he seems (Col. iv. 10, 11) to be included by St. Paul among "those of the circumcision." He was probably an active helper in Paul's work, as he was of sufficient importance to be made his "fellow-prisoner."

† Trophimus, an Ephesian, Acts xxi. 29.

no reason whatever for considering that any of these persons were "ignorant," or "fishermen."

It may be observed that for some time before the close of his account of St. Paul, St. Luke begins to speak in the first person. As early as the sixteenth chapter (tenth verse) he writes in the Acts, "we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called *us* for to preach the Gospel unto them." With an occasional break, variously accounted for, this mode of association of himself with St. Paul is kept up to the end. In the last chapter he writes, "The barbarous people showed *us* no little kindness," "we came to Rome." And therefore though the name of LUKE does not actually appear in his book we must include him in the list of Evangelisers referred to therein. This man, to whose pen we owe all that is certainly known of the first days of the Christian Church, and also many important particulars of Our Lord's life and records of His words unmentioned by the other Evangelists, was the attached personal attendant who remained faithful by the side of the aged, persecuted and at last almost deserted Paul, when, alas, some had "forsaken" him and others had "departed from" him. Luke was "the beloved physician." His very profession would have necessitated a good education, and parts of his writings are brought forward sometimes as proofs of his having been acquainted with classical literature. No one can prove him a Jew. He addresses both his treatises to "Theophilus," and the title he gives him, *κρατιστος*, "most excellent," is the same as

that given by Claudius Lysias and Tertullus to Felix, and by Paul to Festus. It may be supposed therefore that Theophilus was a Roman of distinguished rank who had been won over to the Christian faith even in those early days.

We have now gone through the list which the Book of the Acts of the Apostles has afforded us the means of furnishing. "But," we ask, "where is the name of Titus?" It may be like the surprise of a new discovery to some of us to find that that familiar name is not mentioned by the inspired historian at all. When we have read St. Paul's Epistle to Titus, and a few scattered notices in some others of the Epistles, we may know all that is to be gathered from the Bible of his history. He was beyond doubt a Gentile (Gal. ii. 3), and seems to have been a very prominent man amongst those who had a personal and active share in spreading the Gospel. St. Paul calls him "My own son after the common faith." Titus was very high indeed in the Apostle's confidence; and himself originated and energetically carried out schemes of Christian benevolence. St. Paul intrusted to him the most difficult commission of setting in order the affairs of the Church of the unruly Cretans, though there seems to be no reason for believing that he was constituted the permanent "Bishop of Crete." There is no one named in the Epistles whose presence seemed to give the Apostle greater comfort than that of this active and benevolent man. Though some have suspected the motives of his departure from Rome,

mentioned 2 Tim. iv. 10, it may be hoped that he went into Dalmatia on the service of the Church, and with the aged Paul's consent.

There are not a few names of friends of St. Paul mentioned in his *Epistles*. I shall here take note of those only who we know rendered active service in the early days of the Christian dispensation.

PHEBE, a deaconess of the Church, at Cenchrea, close to Corinth. She was a succourer of many, including Paul, and had to travel to Rome, probably on official business.

ANDRONICUS and **JUNIA**, persons of note, and no doubt of activity also, as they were seized and imprisoned. They "were also in Christ before" their fellow-prisoner Paul. The latter may have been a woman.

URBANE, Paul's "helper in Christ."

TRYPHENA and **TRYPHOSA**, both Christian women, "who laboured in the Lord" at Rome.

TERTIUS, probably a Roman, a secretary or amanuensis of Paul (Rom. xvi. 22).

STEPHANAS and his **HOUSEHOLD**, "addicted to the ministry of the saints," helpers and fellow-labourers of Paul. They were also of the very few personally baptised by that Apostle.

CLEMENT, a fellow-labourer with Paul.

JESUS JUSTUS, a fellow-worker with Paul, and a comfort to him. He was a Jew.

EPAPHRAS, "a servant of Christ," and one of Paul's "fellow prisoners."

ARCHIPPUS, a "fellow-soldier" with Paul. He is

spoken of as having received some "ministry in the Lord," which he is warned to "fulfil."

ARTEMAS. I presume that he was a person of activity, as I find him mentioned by Paul in connection with such a name as that of the confidential and faithful Tychicus.

With the exception of one, the names of the above-mentioned helpers of Paul in the Gospel are evidently Greek or Roman, and with them I conclude for the present the notice of the first disseminators of Christianity by preaching and active labour.

By the means of preaching and active personal labour, the Gospel was certainly at the first spread, according to the good pleasure of God. It may be asked then : "Had what we call 'the New Testament' nothing to do with the establishment of Christianity in the world?" At first, manifestly nothing ; for a considerable portion of it is a history of that establishment, its commencement and early days ; and the other parts were written for the edification and comfort of Christians themselves, and for the correction of abuses in the constituted Churches. Even the Gospels were apparently intended at first for the more perfect information of those who had been "instructed" and were already believers.* The Epistles are generally verbally addressed to the saints—the faithful brethren—the Church of God—to the elect—to those who had obtained precious faith—to the beloved children and

* St. Luke's preface to his Gospel.

brethren of the Apostles, that their joy might be full. Even in the Epistle which we call St. Paul's to the Hebrews, which singly in the sacred canon looks like a methodical demonstration of Christian truth—which particularly points out Christ as at the same time the sufficient sacrifice and the great High Priest—an appeal is made to the "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." Such expressions may possibly apply to the seed of the faithful Abraham and the calling of the Jewish Church, but the subsequent reference to those "that had the rule over" them, and to their mutual "brother Timothy," prove that professed Christians in general were at all events ultimately addressed.

But the New Testament, though not designed in its original objects to serve as a proof of Christianity, certainly is so now, and has been so for ages; and without it the conquests of Christ's religion would, I believe, soon have ceased to extend. It behoves us therefore to notice not only the early preachers but also the **INSPIRED WRITERS** of the **NEW COVENANT**.

They are, in the order of our Bibles—

1. **ST. MATTHEW.**
2. **ST. MARK.**
3. **ST. LUKE.**
4. **ST. JOHN.**

Strict adherence to our rule that the Scriptures should be made our only sources of information in this inquiry, would lead us to omit all notice here of Matthew, Mark and Luke, as the writers of what are called the three "synoptic gospels;" but there is scarcely a rule

which admits of no profitable exception, and though we are nowhere told in the Bible that those personages were the authors of the books which go by their names, there is no particular reason to doubt the correctness of the undisputed tradition of the early Church to that effect. Certain expressions in the fourth Gospel are considered to afford sufficient proof of St. John's authorship; but nothing need be added here to what has already been said of him and the other "Evangelists."

5. ST. PAUL. We have also considered the character and circumstances of this wonderfully energetic, self-denying, and able man, who, after having at first fully possessed the confidence of the persecuting High Priest, could justly claim the foremost rank amongst the preachers of the faith that once he destroyed.

6. ST. JAMES. This sacred writer and St. Jude are believed by some noted commentators to have been literally two of the children of Joseph and Mary, who are indicated as they suppose in the following passages: Matthew xii. 46, xiii. 55, 56; Mark iii. 31, vi. 3; Luke viii. 19; and to have been of the brethren of Our Lord, spoken of in John vii. 3, Acts i. 14, and I. Cor. ix. 5. There is mention also of "James the Lord's brother," in Gal. i. 19. It is possible he may have been originally of the same calling as Joseph's—a carpenter. But however that may be, the writer of the Epistle, whether the Lord's real brother, or James the Apostle the son of Alphæus (as some suppose, but more probably the former, as no claim to the Apostleship

appears in his book or in Jude's), could not have been James one of the three favoured disciples, the brother of John, slain by the sword of Herod, for that Herod's vexing of the Church must have happened before the date assigned to the Epistle. As already hinted, the purity of the Greek in the Epistle of St. James, notwithstanding some abruptness of style, seems to prove that he was a person of studious habits and literary taste. From various notices in the New Testament, we are led to conclude that James was constituted what we might in modern language call the Bishop, or perhaps Archbishop, of the Metropolitan Church of Jerusalem. He is probably the James to whom Our Lord specially showed Himself after his resurrection. His epistle is statedly addressed to the "Dispersion." Valuable maxims may be gathered by us from his rules for the practice of the Jewish believers; his words of reproof and comfort for the Twelve Tribes may with proper discrimination be most profitably applied to those of Abraham's spiritual children of the present day who severally need them, but his Epistle was never intended for the *propagation* of the faith. James's just and liberal and conciliatory spirit prompted a most important decree, which gave liberty and comfort to the Gentiles, and might well form a precedent to his successors for laying on those who would turn to God no heavier yoke than they are able to bear. But personally he seems even more than Peter to have confined his ministry to the circumcision.

7. PETER. Of him we have already spoken.

8. ST. JUDE. He is mentioned in our notice of St. James, of whom he calls himself the "brother." His Epistle, short as it is, contains some noble sentences, but is of a strong Jewish cast. Of whatever family the author may have been, whether Judas the Apostle or not, we read nothing of him after the first chapter of Acts.

Lastly. As being a doubtful point, the AUTHOR OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, if not St. Paul. But whether Paul or Barnabas or Silas, Luke or Mark, Aquila or Apollos, Silas or Clement, each has been already spoken of.*

I think we have now had under notice the name of every person the New Testament mentions as having been in any way employed in the work of establishing Christianity in the world. It is time therefore now to make a summary of some things that we do find to the purpose of our inquiry from a search of the sacred records.

1. We find that while no mention at all is made of the occupations of some of Our Lord's first disciples, and one of them was a receiver of customs and probably a man of some wealth, it is certain that a few of the

* I suppose that so many persons think it highly culpable to doubt that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written by St. Paul, only because they hold everything sacred that appears in our authorised version, and the heading exists there, "The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews." But to my mind the Christian world would derive a great advantage from a demonstration that this Epistle came not from the hand of St. Paul. For I think that it could not but be a comfort to know that it was not that great Apostle alone who in the earliest days of the Church could teach such doctrines as we find in that divinely inspired book.

principal ones were in the fishing trade ; but even these were men not exclusively devoted to the affairs of this life before Our Lord's call ; for they had the means and time for leaving their occupations for a period and for applying themselves to sacred studies. We may also note that they were men of ambitious character, and that there are circumstances alluded to which make us think that they were neither poor at first nor illiterate ; and that several of the early disciples showed themselves to be men of independent thought and inquiring disciplined minds.

2. We find that the near approach of the Kingdom of Heaven was proclaimed to the Jews, to the lost sheep of the House of Israel exclusively, by the Twelve Apostles, and by seventy other unnamed disciples before Our Lord's ascension. It must be remembered that of the nature of the Kingdom they proclaimed these heralds were themselves at that time ignorant. Of this there are several proofs in Scripture.

3. We find that beyond the notice that the first Apostles, being all "filled with the Holy Ghost" at the day of Pentecost, "began to speak with other tongues the wonderful works of God," there is absolutely no record of anything done after that date in the cause of Christianity by any of them besides Peter and John, unless the James mentioned in the twelfth* and fifteenth chapters was an Apostle, which is very much doubted. And we find no single act, sermon or speech attributed to John individually. For a time he is shown as se-

* v. 17th.

conding Peter, but after the account of the transaction at Samaria, John disappears entirely from the narrative. Peter is the only one of the original Apostles mentioned further, and no active proceedings of his are recorded in Acts after the conversion of Cornelius.

4. We find the following names which, as well as I can discover, are *all* that the New Testament mentions of those who by preaching or missionary labour of any kind, took part in spreading the Gospel after the day of Pentecost. Peter, John, Stephen, Philip (Evangelist), Paul, Men of Cyrene and Cyprus, Barnabas, John Mark, Simeon (Niger), Lucius, Manaen, Judas (Barsabas), Silas, Timotheus, Aquila and Priscilla, Apollos, Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Tychicus, Trophimus, Titus, Phebe, Andronicus and Junia, Urbane, Tryphena and Tryphosa, Tertius, Stephanas (and household), Clement, Jesus Justus, Epaphras, Archipus and Artemas.

5. We find that of those we have just named, the principal men had singular capacities for the great work for which they were commissioned.

We are here, then, in a condition to answer the question, "Where are the Galilean fishermen who are described as having succeeded, in spite of the inveterate opposition of the learned and mighty, in establishing Christianity in *THE WORLD*?" As far as any authoritative records enlighten us, their number dwindles down from the day of Pentecost to only two, and these the most distinguished of the whole. Indeed we may say that the individual actions and

words of but ONE were judged worthy of mention in sacred history. "The Twelve" probably continued to preach in the Holy Land (but even this we do not know for certain), and some of them, after a long time, *may*, with more or less success, have carried the Gospel to other parts, but we have no infirmation in Scripture that they did so, except an incidental mention in the Epistle to the Galatians of Peter's being once at Antioch; and the address of Peter's Epistle from Babylon (whether literal or figurative), and the allusion in the Apocalypse to the writer's imprisonment in Patmos.*

The illustrious Peter, who made so glorious a com-

* As I do not find the Apostle John's residence at Ephesus in his old age mentioned in the New Testament, I have not alluded to it above, but there is no reason for any doubt on the point. And if, as we suppose, he was the author of the Book of Revelation, he was made the medium of divine communications to the Churches of Asia Minor, though there is no ground whatever for believing that he first brought the Christian faith to any of them. Having mentioned the Apocalypse, it may be fair to remark that the learned have pointed out instances of great diversity of style between that Book and the Gospel and Epistle of John. It is stated that there are many more Hebraisms and grammatical inelegancies in that Book than in the other two. But some of the most judicious say that we need not therefore conclude that all those Books had not the same author, as the Revelation would have been written hurriedly, on the occasion, on the strong impulse of rapture, when the Apostle would naturally fall into his own old Galilean dialect or idiom. The Gospel and Epistles, on the other hand, seem to have been written more at leisure, in a more studied and guarded way; and in composing them John may be considered to have made full use of any superior advantages of mental culture he may have had in comparison with the Evangelists Matthew and Mark. And there are many difficulties in the way of supposing that any but the Apostle John could have been the writer of the Apocalypse.

mencement, whose first convincing sermon must have been carried by the foreign Jews and proselytes who heard it to Parthia and Media and Elam, Mesopotamia and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and Lybia, Rome, Crete, and Arabia, and must have helped to prepare the way for those who were afterwards appointed to convey the Gospel to foreign lands, Peter, called the first amongst Christ's personally chosen Apostles, the man put forward to open the Kingdom of Heaven, even he, with all his eminent qualities, was only the Foundation. The costly and massive stone, the well-tried rock, on which some noble edifice is built, is laid with state and shoutings before the presence of thousands. Soon, however, though its use and service will never cease, it is covered up and no more seen. Very differently, and with more delicate art, are hewn the lively stones, the graceful pillars, the polished corners adorning the Temple itself, which ever growing up in loftiness and grandeur, shall become at length the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth.

Peter, then, when he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles,* is not spoken of by any inspired writer as having gone much further than the threshold. Of his subsequent proceedings we only know from the

* I am of course aware that this expression is used with reference to the labours of Paul and Barnabas (Acts xiv. 27), but they might not perhaps have intended to apply it exclusively to themselves. There is no proof that in speaking of the admission of the Gentiles, they did not relate everything in order to the Church at Antioch, commencing with the events recorded in Acts x. 44-46.

New Testament that he must have visited Antioch and Babylon. To the former place he appears to have gone scarcely in the interest of the Gentiles. From the latter, wherever it may have been, he wrote to the strangers scattered throughout various places (as many think, Jews of the Dispersion); and he afterwards wrote to those who *had obtained* like precious faith with himself. It does not appear that Peter, but others, received the commission to go and compel the Gentiles to come in.* And in this work, that is, in the performance we are inquiring about now, could any men have been more appropriately selected as agents with

* I am of course adhering above to my plan of speaking only of the things that the New Testament informs us of. But Peter no doubt for many years rendered services of the highest order to the Church as a most distinguished and honoured Apostle of Our Lord, but principally we may believe in Judea and Galilee and Samaria; and, even when beyond these limits, to Jewish converts, as we are told expressly that *the Gospel of the Circumcision* was committed unto him. But there can be no reason to doubt the accounts which seem so well founded of his visiting Rome, and there is nothing that I know of to contradict the tradition of his having suffered martyrdom there. And there seem good grounds for believing that the Gospel of St. Mark was written at the instigation of St. Peter, if not indeed actually dictated by him. It is interesting to reflect that Mark, who is mentioned in his first Epistle as being with him ("Marcus my son"), was also a friend and companion of St. Paul at various periods of his life, and it has been suggested that possibly both he and Silvanus (if the latter were the same as Paul's Silvanus or Silas) were sometimes entrusted with communications between the two chief Apostles. Some critics have gone so far as to suggest that as Peter is not considered the best acquainted of all the Apostles with Greek, his first Epistle was written under his direction by Silas as an amanuensis or interpreter, and the second by Mark at a later period of Peter's life, and that the difference in style and tone between the two Epistles might be thus accounted for.

better qualifications, even humanly speaking, than those who were actually chosen of God for it—than the energetic yet wise, enduring and affectionate Paul, who, not for the sake of selfish ease, but for the advancement of the truth of God, could become all things to all men: a Hebrew of the Hebrews to the Jews, a Roman citizen to the soldiers, a well read scholar before Festus—than the dignified, courteous, and kind-hearted Barnabas—than the brave, faithful, and cheerful Roman citizen, Silas—than the beloved Timothy, instructed from a child, son of a devout mother and a Gentile father—than the learned and eloquent Apollos—than the trustworthy and discreet Titus, foremost in active charity, a thorough Greek—than Luke, the man of constant friendship, the patient historian, the learned Gentile physician? It is true the weapons of their warfare, by which the conquest of the world was commenced, were not carnal, but it certainly pleased Him who best knows how to adapt the means to the end to arm for the fight combatants of a different class from one composed of what we should call poor ignorant fishermen. The original Apostles had their work to do, and did it so well *among the Jews* that “the number of the disciples multiplied in *Jerusalem* greatly, and even a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.” But the great men under whose leadership the forces of Christianity went forth to conquer the nations of *the world* were certainly not brought up on the shores of the lakes of Galilee. Fresh from the academies of Tarsus and the instructions

of Gamaliel, from the philosophic schools of Alexandria, from the rich Isle of Cyprus and the plains of heathen Lycaonia, came the new leaders, who were most of them cultivating their intellects during part of the time that the earnest and truth-seeking men first called by Christ were pursuing their occupations, not dishonourably, in the fishing trade, or in the more lucrative one of sitting at the receipt of custom. And we should not lose sight of the fact before adverted to, that the Gospel which Paul preached among the Gentiles he had by the direct, the immediate, revelation of Jesus Christ.

I have made some endeavour to delineate, as far as my purpose required, the characters of the men whom inspired Scripture points out to us as the agents specially selected for evangelising the world. What occasion there may have been for my going into so many particulars, may be best shown if I present an extract or two from some admired works, which have had a large circulation, and give a very different account of things. In one we read: "*A few illiterate fishermen, issuing from an obscure corner of a distant Roman province, unlearned, unsupported, succeeded in overthrowing the religions of Rome and Greece and Judea, and establishing the religion of Christ.*" Another book rather enlarges the agency, ascribing it to "poor, illiterate fishermen *and* tentmakers," candidly acknowledging, I suppose, the services of Aquila and Paul, thus described as "poor and illiterate," but still totally ignoring the labours of Apollos, Timothy, Titus and

Luke, who were neither fishermen nor tentmakers. In another place our attention is directed to "*twelve men, poor, artless, and uneducated*; triumphing over the fiercest and most determined opposition, over the tyranny of the magistrate, and *the subtleties of the philosopher*, over *the prejudices of the Gentile*, and the bigotry of the Jew." In another book I read: "The Founder of the Christian religion took *twelve poor, illiterate* men into His company . . . and sent them to preach the good tidings of salvation to their countrymen. A while after He selected *seventy more* . . . and sent them forth to preach the Gospel: . . . they were everywhere successful as to the objects of their mission, and *in the course of two centuries* accomplished what has been already described" (alluding to the rapid promulgation of Christianity in the world). In this extract no preachers are mentioned but the "Twelve" and the "Seventy," and the intention seems, plainly enough, that we should understand that their successors for two centuries were men of exactly the same condition as the original Twelve and the Seventy. In another place, the very able writer is so sadly incautious as to say: "*Weak, illiterate men, of the lowest class, these* were they who triumphed over flesh and blood and *converted the Universe!*"*

It may still perhaps be asked why I have taken the

* In the above extracts the *italics* are used for the purposes of this paper, and some to mark the expressions considered the most objectionable.

trouble of pursuing to this length an inquiry which may seem at first sight to be of no particular importance. Do I wish to show that, after all, the excellency of the power is of man, and not of God? Most certainly not. Even Paul would have planted, even Apollos would have watered, entirely in vain, had not God given the increase. Or, am I desirous to prove that "the offence of the cross" has "ceased"? Not yet, I would say; not yet! though happily we are scarcely ever pained now with the coarseness that used to characterise the attacks of infidels of the eighteenth century and the beginning of this. The old cry of *Ecrasez l'infame!* would be put down at once now as a piece of ignorant and vulgar impertinence. It cannot be called the fashion to-day to throw contempt on the person of Our Saviour. He may indeed to modern scepticism be the mere son of Joseph and Mary, but the philosophising unbeliever admits him now to be the "man of colossal proportions," the "admirable human figure," the "sublime person," the "incomparable man," in fine the most wonderful and eminent being that ever sprang from human parents. His doctrine is now allowed to have been to an astonishing degree "in advance of the age," but still it was merely "His own," and not in the scriptural sense, the doctrine "of Him that sent Him;" and men of understanding are expected to accept only as much of Christ's teaching as may fall in with their own enlightened notions or accord with their own refined ideas. Let us hope that even this deferential tone,

this change of feeling towards "Jesus," may be taken as a sign of improvement, as an advance, an instalment of the homage that must at last be universally paid. But infidelity may not be the less dangerous because the enemy comes under the garb of an admirer, and looks at first sight almost an ally. As long as human nature continues what it is, there will always be parts of Christianity which will not be altogether received by those who have only the teachings of their own minds and the promptings of their own inclination to guide them. So, even in these days there may always be such a thing as having to "bear the reproach of Christ;" and if laid on us we should still esteem it greater riches than seemed to Moses the treasures of Egypt, that is than the advantages of all temporal or wordly wisdom, knowledge and station. My main object in this paper has not been to deny this, but to examine the value of a common conventional assertion. I have examined it; with candour, I trust; and I believe I have found it to be really nothing more than a conventionalism, untrue and unscriptural; and I protest against it because I feel assured that what is untrue and unscriptural cannot fail to be also mischievous. I am convinced too that the time expended on this investigation has not been quite thrown away, because there is no study connected with Scripture that does not yield some good fruit if honestly undertaken. Our present inquiry may be useful, for instance, if it has shown that there is no ground for the damaging assertion of supercilious unbelievers that only women, and weak, wretched and

ignorant men would have anything to do with Christianity. Well-meaning friends who talk too much about the despised and illiterate Galileans and the few poor ignorant fishermen, should really think what they are about when they place to the credit of such persons' work (as far as human means were employed) that which was effected by an agency of quite a different order. They give thus, very needlessly, an unfair advantage to the enemies of the truth.

We may be taught also to mistrust conventionalisms in general. If one so much in vogue and held in so great favour be unmaintainable, we may well believe that others exist equally groundless. There is no room to doubt indeed that there are several favourite religious phrases which will not bear examination. Some conventionalisms there are which having existed from time immemorial are tolerated still; and, though hollow enough, pass current in all classes. It can only be hoped that increased information may in time suffice for their gradual abolition, or that at length they may die of old age. Some other conventionalisms are usually reserved for select circles, being seldom met with but in the correspondence and details of conversations of some good people *inter se*. But though they are not fit for exposure to the contact or friction of the rough world, there are individuals who, from a mistaken sense of consistency or from a morbid desire of rendering themselves conspicuous, persist in employing them in ordinary intercourse with men, and do their best to bring ridicule on themselves and discredit on

religion in consequence. The reason the more sagacious of those who use such phrases amongst their own people drop them when in more general society is not because they fear to cast their pearls before swine, but because they have a private instinctive conviction that their favourite party embellishments are no pearls at all. But Christians can do no good to their great cause by retaining anything that is inherently weak. The time has fully come when those who desire to fight against infidelity and indifference with any success, must "prove all things" and only "hold fast that which is good."

But leaving now such incidental topics, we may see whether there may not yet remain something of practical value to be gained from a direct retrospect of our main subject.

One thing that it may teach us is to be prepared for "diversities of gifts," "differences of administrations," "diversities of operations," brought to combine in the greatest work ever set on foot; and to recognise through all of them "the same Spirit," "the same Lord," "the same God, which worketh all in all."

For when genuine revivals of piety and important reformations which have commenced with the lower, middle, or at any rate not the most highly educated classes, extend to parts beyond their birthplace, or spread upwards to the regions of power, intellectual culture and religious conservatism, a thorough change of agency may be required if progress is yet further to be made. It may be affirmed not only that such a

change is reasonable, but that it is certain from the inspired records of early Christianity that such a change was actually made as soon as the time had come, in the providence of God, that the Gospel of His Son should be spread beyond the Jewish community, and be presented to distant nations and before the great ones of the earth. The same principle may be observed not only in respect of the spread of religion, but in the prosecution of many ordinary concerns. There are few great undertakings which can be begun, gone on with and finished by the same class of workmen. The rough and sturdy labourer at first employed with axe and spade about one of our great ways of modern communication to move masses of foliage and heavy earth, prepares the ground for a man of greater skill and art who forges the metal into form, and to the skilled workman who accurately lays down the iron way. But the labours of this last would be of no use but for the final work of the still more ingenious mechanist who constructs the powerful but delicately made engine which completes the service of communication. The originating mind which plans and orders the whole well knows what kind of men to employ at the different stages of the great enterprise. And so in the important work of improving the religious condition of our countrymen or others, let no one despise, still less let him ridicule, the homely and familiar energies of the man of the people, unrefined though he may be. Nor let those who prize the faithful ministrations of an unlettered

Boanerges make light of the benefits of learning and cultivation. For it could be hardly wiser to think of converting the educated and intellectual with vulgarisms than to call in an honest labourer with his pick to arrange or repair the polished machinery of a locomotive. Paul and Apollos and Titus were not probably of the class of men best calculated for going from household to household, from village to village, about the shores of the northern lakes of Palestine; and perhaps if they had been so employed they would not have returned with the exuberant joy of those good men whom the wisdom of Our Lord sent through the country places with the simple message that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. And the method, the eloquence and the administrative capacity shown by those very distinguished men just named, and their coadjutors, were effective among people and nations that it is fair to suppose would have shut their ears entirely to the provincialisms of the Seventy. Paul, though he received nothing from the original pillars of the Church, despised them not but took their advice, and even went to receive their decrees. And Peter spoke of the Apostle of the Gentiles as his "beloved brother," and accorded to his writings the highest possible title, whilst admitting that there were some things in them "hard to be understood." And so in our days, whilst different orders of men are working for the same Master, let the one set be always ready in Christian charity to "give the right hand of fellowship" to the other. Let men like the earliest Evangelisers remain among the peculiar people who

appreciate their worth ; but let those of the order of Barnabas, Silas and Paul pursue their no less useful way in peace among the cosmopolitans.

And something more may perhaps be gathered from the consideration of all these matters, which it may be as well that those who have the direction of evangelising efforts among the heathen should bear in mind. If it would not be too presumptuous on the part of an humble good-wisher to offer a suggestion or two for their consideration, I would commence by saying that if what has preceded be correct it seems to follow that only those men should be chosen as Missionaries in foreign lands who have, or at least who possess capabilities of acquiring, some special *aptitude for the particular work* they are to be put to. But does not the state of things existing in many parts lead us to judge that it must be too much the custom of our great Societies to be satisfied with a candidate who may present himself for Missionary work, or for training thereto, if only "his heart is in the right place," that is to say—if his motives and Christianity are beyond dispute? I gladly acknowledge that not only pious but suitable men have been selected for some spheres of labour abroad. I thankfully note the measure of success that has followed their self-denying exertions in parts of Africa, New Zealand, the South Seas, and in certain districts even of India. But in other places, generally speaking, results, or rather the absence of results, tell a very different story. In India, as a whole, efficiency

and success appear to be the exception, not the rule. There, the most sanguine friends of Missions must admit that the progress made has been extremely limited, when compared with the work required. Their hearts are cheered by hope and faith; the reward, generally speaking, is a thing as yet unseen. It may be time then that they should inquire without prejudice if they have really been using the proper means. If no results could be reasonably anticipated from the agency they employ, they might spare their own directing labours and the money and disappointments of themselves and of the subscribers to whom they so often appeal. They are fond of saying that the little grain of mustard-seed they are planting will in time grow to a great tree; but as it is so long in even taking root, had they not better ascertain whether they have been sowing it in the right way? Within the last few days it has been my lot to hear of this smallest of all seeds, in a discourse pronounced by a clergyman sent from the Church Missionary Society to plead their cause before the congregation with whom I usually worship. The good minister in a sermon, otherwise admirable, gave us the stock conventionalisms about the "few unlettered Galilean fishermen" (his precise words, for I took them down), and wished us to understand that they prevailed over the world, and that Greece and Rome* fell before them. Now this I

* It may perhaps be not unfairly remarked that, after all, I have not shown and cannot show that the Roman Church was founded by Paul or any of his associates. That may be true, but neither can it be shown

humbly think is the mischievous notion that should be corrected; for as long as the leading men of Missionary Societies continue impressed with this curious belief, which is contradicted by the very book which they wish to introduce among the heathen, so long may they be expected to carry out an erroneous principle. The thing seems to speak for itself. Disappointment must ensue. If we look at the case of India we may recollect that, unlike many heathen parts, it is an immense country where there are princes and very rich men who enjoy a state of great luxury and a kind of civilisation, many of them (to use a somewhat misapplied term) highly educated. There are also among

that it was founded by Peter or any of the original Apostles. The fact is we have no account at all of its origin; and the probability is I think that, so to speak, it founded itself. People went to the great city as to a central part from all the countries of the world. There were many Jews settled there who were dispersed and returned again; and we may well suppose that some converts, among whom there might be perhaps a few Gentiles, would have made their way to Rome. Their mere meeting there would of itself have formed a Church, though no person of authority had gone to proclaim the Gospel to the inhabitants. Indeed Paul actually says at the beginning of his Epistle (i. 15), that he is *ready to preach the Gospel* there, which expression seems to imply that that had not been done before, especially as he says (xv. 20) that in preaching the Gospel he did not like to build on another man's foundation. But however that may be, the existence of the Epistle, and the knowledge we have from Scripture that he did go to Rome, prove that Paul in early days made it his own charge to foster and extend the Christian cause there. His Epistle makes it evident also that up to its date the Roman Church contained a very large proportion of men of strictly Jewish descent, very ill instructed in the principles of Christianity, to whom he writes as a Jew to Jews. I know of nothing to prove that the faith made any considerable progress among the Gentile inhabitants before the personal exertions there of Paul himself.

these the proud Mahometans, perfectly satisfied with themselves, the historic deeds of their fathers, their religious creed and impressive ritual. Besides these, to say nothing of the holy Brahmins, for all heathen communities must have their priests, there are the masses of the common sorts of Hindoo, including vast numbers of the order of the wretched Ryot, whose daily toil may bring him in just rice enough twice a day to keep away actual starvation. Now *for which* of these classes is our "Missionary"* in India intended? That he is always a good and highly estimable man, I know not only from common report but from private correspondence, yet I fear he is one generally to be pitied. Let any one who has looked at recently published accounts of India, say, if men of our Missionary class are persons who could possibly go about as the Seventy did, two and two, and could live among the populace, helping to heal their bodies and quiet their demoniacal passions; and telling them about the Gospel of the Son of God, which some day shall certainly be proclaimed throughout their land? Or say if they are persons of distinguished talents, acquirements, or position, that would make an impression on the more wealthy and instructed natives, or if they have that social standing which would of itself induce the higher Europeans to cheer them with companionable regard, and encourage with their powerful influence?†

* I use the generic term applying to agents of all the Societies and of all denominations.

† Exceptions, I know, are numerous, and I am not suggesting that a Missionary should possess all the qualifications hinted at, but inquiring if there are not Missionaries without any of them.

I grieve to say that I have failed to procure any admission from a correspondent in Bengal, whose opinions are shared by a class of Europeans there, that the Missionaries do any real good; but as he is on the spot and I am thousands of miles away, I find it useless to continue the discussion with him. Some of our countrymen in India, however, doubtless take a very deep interest in the cause, do all they can to promote it, and hope for the best. There must be Missionaries also more happily placed than those whom my friend has seen in their isolation and inefficiency.

It is very true that it would be almost impossible for men of European blood to carry out in the East a system such as that which has been so well begun by the labours of City Missionaries and Bible Women in our country. It is not that the Missionaries are unwilling to encounter hardship, and practise self-denial, so much as it is virtually impossible for them to accommodate themselves to unwholesome modes of life and of diet in unhealthy climates, and to the repulsive habits of those for whose salvation they strive. And in many parts, native prejudices and customs would prove at present insuperable barriers to their doing so.* Nevertheless exploring travellers do often manage to throw off their old habits, and live after the manner of the people whose lands they go to discover. But if the system of working by familiar intercourse cannot be put in practice on any large scale by Europeans, though,

* I have seen these things well stated in recent publications.

perhaps, there may be stations here and there where some peculiarly fit men might succeed in it, are there no other plans that might be tried? Anything would seem better than sending good deserving men to despondency, isolation and uselessness, to positions in fact which almost insure their being treated with unsympathising neglect, by their own countrymen as well as the natives. They have the bare good-will probably of all; they are well entitled to such salaries as they draw; and those of them who have households exhibit every domestic virtue; but their neighbours who do not appreciate their motives are too apt to judge that they have settled in India, as other Englishmen mostly do, merely for the sake of their worldly interests. But supposing *quality* rather than *numbers* on the Missionary staff were made the grand object of directing solicitude for a time; there might be fewer men chosen, but that very circumstance would leave means for securing persons from a higher class; and in all our gifts to the Lord, out of everything we hold under Him, we should offer the best thereof. We know what rigorous preliminary ordeals those who present themselves for the service of the State in India have to pass through, yet each Missionary might be as carefully selected for his peculiar kind of work as civil and military servants are for theirs. Which have the most difficult and important task, I leave it for others to decide. I am not so prejudiced as to deny that there have been shining lights in the Missionary firmament, but still I question whether

even these eminent and richly endowed men who are most frequently held out now as patterns and examples of self-sacrifice were really well qualified by natural temperament and sociable habits for the work to which they devoted themselves. For it is admitted that the records of their genius, earnestness, bravery, and self-denial, more than of any success that fell to their lot, have been the incentives that have caused many enlistments in the Missionary ranks. A good evangeliser should hardly be a desponding man, half-crushed with woe, but rather be able, like the great Exemplar of those who go about doing good, to aid with kindly presence the festivities of a wedding, to take his place as a guest even with a Publican, as well as to sit down to eat bread at a splendid feast at some proud Pharisee's house. Would it be possible then for our Societies (I speak of them generally) to induce a few "*chief men among the brethren*," as in old times were Judas surnamed Barnabas, and Silas, to go out with a few like "the beloved Barnabas and Paul"? persons who would command the respect of the great in heathen communities, of the proud Mussulman as well as of the pliant Hindoo, and might be expected to enjoy all the advantage which the support and influence of European officials could give? It would not be to the point to object that this would be relying on human means, for on those, in the shape of men and money, the Societies are, under God, now depending; and they are constantly crying for more. And they must reap as they sow. Men have never yet "conquered the world" without

having some special qualities which enabled them, under the providence of God, so to do. If the military and civil servants of the Crown could see any system in operation which would give scope to really active efforts in the way of Christianising the natives of India ; if, as I have just hinted, they saw men of known talent, learning, or position chosen ; or if they saw well-selected hardworking men, who would not shrink from roughness, sent out to go among the poorer folk till native Christians could be got for that sort of work ; or if they saw the unhappy occupants of barren stations* called in and collected at a few central colleges or dépôts where they might take counsel together and organise plans of aggressive activity, and from whence well-assorted parties might issue as from Antioch in old time ; or, if all these plans were impracticable, as perhaps they may be, if they saw *anything* that would make it evident that we were quite *in earnest* about Missionary work, who can tell if they would not be brought to countenance the good cause and give their hearty assistance, whatever that may be worth, though in my opinion their co-operation is so essential that we

* The following are extracts from an "annual letter" from a Bengal Missionary, printed in the last Report (the sixty-fifth year) of the Church Missionary Society :—"Alas ! there are Mofussil stations in which the Missionary laments that he knows not of one living soul." "There are Mofussil stations where for ten or twelve years not a soul has been brought into the fold." But better things are reported also, and to my mind one of the most hopeful efforts made lately is the "Zenana" movement. It will be a most encouraging circumstance if Christian instruction can be taken into the interior of native households and amongst the women. Of late also, some "itinerating" efforts have been set on foot.

are hardly likely to evangelise India without it. At present, numbers of them, and perhaps a majority of the young, honestly, though erroneously, think the whole Missionary system a harmless delusion. This idea may be a simple prejudice, but it unquestionably exists, and it might be as well to try to do something to dispel it. Circumstances already adverted to combine to make India a peculiar place; it is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that it requires a peculiar mode of treatment; and we need not wonder that efforts of a nature to succeed elsewhere have not generally prospered there. That there is vitality in Missionary work, and that it may by God's blessing prosper where properly directed, is evidenced by the fruit that has been borne in some parts of the world, notably, for instance, at Sierra Leone, where the right track seems to have been hit on and well followed up, and the native Church is wisely encouraged with many honours.

There is also another point which it may be within our subject to allude to whilst speaking of Missions. It seems scarcely consistent with the lessons to be derived from the historians in the New Testament to purposely *delay* administering the *rite of baptism* when a person in heathen lands wishes to become a Christian. We can none of us pass *through* our term of probation till the moment of departure from this life concludes our course here; but the good foreign Missionary seems to act as if the convert's real and conclusive acceptance might be ascertained by his outward behaviour for a few months and his acquisition during

some arbitrary period of a string of phrases ready to be produced on every occasion thereafter. All this is doubtless for the good object of preventing discredit on religion from the man's falling away after admission to the Church, but it does not prevent great and cruel disappointments from hypocrites, as Missionary "Reports" themselves testify. The interval exposes the poor man to the continued and powerful solicitations of his heathen friends and to temptations to falter before he has taken the decisive step and has finally committed himself to Christianity. But the Apostles and Evangelists we read of in Scripture observed no such delay. They required no acquaintance with theological intricacies, no probationary course at all. We read of no candidates kept waiting for baptism in the apostolic days. Such a system, whether right or wrong, was left for the times of nascent error and superstition which soon supervened. Even Our Lord, by the hands of his followers, baptised multitudes, and little indeed could they have known about his real character and work. When Peter preached his first sermon at Pentecost, baptism seems to have been immediately administered to great numbers whose only recorded qualification for it was that they had *gladly received his word* (Acts ii. 41). There might be hypocrites, but such wretched people were for God to deal with, and their shame only caused great and salutary fear, and believers were the more added to the Lord (Acts v.). The people of Samaria were baptised as soon as they believed Philip "preaching the things concerning the

Kingdom of God." Peter blamed him not though Simon Magus was of their number; and the Evangelist himself felt not the least remorse for what he had done, for immediately after leaving Samaria he hesitated not to baptise a man after an interview of but a few minutes whom he had never seen before. (Acts viii.) Paul baptised Lydia as soon as he found that she attended to the things that were spoken by him. The jailor at Philippi was baptised the very night he had attempted to kill himself. Neither that quickly converted heathen nor the good Lydia could have given any proofs of constancy; and what shall we say of the jailor's household? In fact, a simple profession of being on the side of Christ seems to have been enough for obtaining baptism in those days, and why not now? The Apostles did not require a person to be perfect in knowledge and thoroughly furnished unto all good works before they admitted him to the Church,* and why should we wait till a man is a thoroughly trained soldier before we allow him to enlist? Rather let him join the army at once, engage to be faithful to his colours, and receive instruction as a willing and

* Since writing the above my convictions have been greatly strengthened by noticing the order observed by Our Lord in giving His parting instructions to the Apostles before His ascension (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20). They are to go and make disciples of all nations, and then mention is made of "baptising them into the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," before "teaching them," &c. Thus are enjoined what Alford justly calls the *initiatory*, *admissory rite*, and the *subsequent teaching* (his own italics). Our authorised version in translating the Greek words *μαθητεύω* and *διδάσκω* by the same English word "teach" is exceedingly unfortunate in this passage.

welcome recruit. Good training may make him an efficient warrior, and if he deserts he alone must bear the consequences; at present the Missionary almost makes himself responsible for his convert. We are apt to smile perhaps at baptisms by wholesale effected by Roman Catholic Missionaries sometimes; but if they are not sufficiently discriminating, it is a question whether we are not too particular. It is a great step to get men to declare themselves for Christ. Let us open the door for them rather than close it. If there had not been a somewhat wholesale baptising occasionally, in days gone by, even in our quarter of the globe, one hardly knows where some of the European nations would have been by this time. Would civilisation have advanced as it did? would true religion have made the progress it has? Much merely nominal Christianity has doubtless resulted, but is not that vastly preferable to heathenism? must it not in some cases be the transition state between what is radically bad to that which is the highest grade of goodness that a community can attain to? is it not the mass in which the leaven must generally work till the whole lump be leavened? As far as the individual is concerned the difference between vital and nominal Christianity is everything; but as far as official or outward acts are concerned, ministers of religion can have nothing to do with the heart. They will find that they can appeal in an infinitely higher and more earnest tone to a nominal Christian than to a heathen or a professed unbeliever. They can take much higher grounds with one than

with the other. The Christianity of many of the Corinthians whom St. Paul calls "saints" in the beginning of his epistle must have been of a very elementary kind, and, notwithstanding brilliant gifts and amiable qualities, their conduct in some highly important matters exceedingly disgraceful; but their profession of Christianity gave the Apostle the means of urging upon these "carnal" men, these "babes in Christ," among whom were "envying, strife, divisions," and a sin "not so much as named among the Gentiles"—who came, some hungry, some drunken, to the Lord's Supper—considerations of the most solemn, powerful and affecting kind that it is possible to employ. (1 Cor. i. 2; iii. 1, 3; v. 1; xi. 21; iii. 16, 17, 23; vi. 15, 19, 20, &c.)

These special applications of my subject to matters connected with Missionary work formed no part of my original plan, though I have been induced to pursue them at some length. The circumstances suggesting them occurred whilst I was in the act of correcting a draft of this paper written some time ago; and the addition is made, not because I am opposed to Missionary effort, nor because I think myself wiser than those who direct it, but simply because what I find in the course of my researches in the New Testament points to principles of action which, in one or two particulars, seem to be scarcely observed by those respected and excellent men. I have been led to think that without hiding from converts abroad the

prospect of the cross that must be taken up by every Christian, our Missionaries should abstain from making fresh crosses of man's devising to put down as obstacles before the very entrance to the path of life. And I think also that it might with advantage be borne in mind that it is not to every difficult post abroad that good, sincere men, with qualifications answering to those of the Galileans and the Seventy, can be sent from hence with any reasonable hope of success. But if there are not openings for their honourable and devoted labours in every foreign station, there is more than one excellent Society at home that would abundantly welcome their assistance and that has plenty of appropriate work to offer to them; whilst men of a very different stamp may be continuing with real efficiency the special work of Paul, Apollos, Luke and Titus, who went forth from their own people and from their native lands to evangelise the nations of the world.

III.

THOUGHTS ON THE FEAR OF
CONSEQUENCES.

RASHNESS, indiscretion, and a backwardness to make all prudent allowance for the inert strength of habit and for the general dread of anything that has the appearance of novelty, have marred many a promising design and frustrated many a proper work. Doubtless, to everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. Yet on the other hand people are often far too ready to take shelter under this plea when they ought to be going forth and exerting themselves for good. Idleness and a distaste for responsibility are too apt to grow inveterate under the easy excuse that "things are not ripe yet"; although the time for action may have really come and the opportunity may be drifting past never to return. When what is wrong may be corrected, when what has proved mischievous may be deprived of the power to pain, it is obvious that the fear of consequences is but an ignoble excuse for inaction. Good to the whole commonwealth must not be obstructed by too scrupulous a deference to the feelings of a few who cannot bear

the least change. The Divine Author of our faith knew full well that no man having drunk old wine straightly desired new, yet that did not hinder Him from entering on His great work and introducing a new dispensation of religion which was to confer the highest benefits on the human race, though it was sure to prove distasteful at first to the majority of His countrymen and kindred, and to grate painfully against the prejudices and even the honest convictions of the Greek as well as of the Jew.

It may not be amiss then to ask ourselves occasionally whether the fear of consequences may not be in reality an unjustifiable timidity which hinders the accomplishment of much good and connives at the perpetuation of much evil.

There are notably two things at the present day greatly required, but not to be done, or at all events to be indefinitely delayed, for fear of consequences. One is, a Revision of the Authorised English Version of the Holy Scriptures* ; and the other, a Revision of certain parts, very few parts, of the Forms for the services, rites and ceremonies ordered by the Church of England.

* I find by some articles in the *Sunday Magazine* that many of my opinions under this head are maintained by the present Dean of Canterbury. So plain indeed are the terms in which they are stated in the course of his very interesting communications entitled "How to use the Gospels," that it might not unnaturally be supposed that I had drawn my conclusions from his writings. Such however is not the fact, for my own mind was made up on the subject before I had the advantage of being acquainted with any of his works. And my paper above was in precisely its present state before the first number of the *Sunday Magazine* came out. I need hardly say with what pleasure I now find that so eminent

1. With respect to that wonderful, that justly-cherished Book, of infinitely greater importance than any other work, original or translated, to be found in our language, "The Holy Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments; translated out of the Original Tongues: and with the Former Translations diligently Compared and Revised, By his Majesty's Special Command. Appointed to be read in Churches."

Admirable as our English Version is, the finest perhaps of all translations, it would be mere superstition to say that it has not like every human work its imperfections. It is, then, capable of improvement. Its very title, just given above, insinuates deficiencies in former efforts, and the arrival of a time when improvements ought to be made and language used better adapted to the condition of the English tongue as in vogue at the period then existing. Its title therefore

a person maintains opinions on this particular subject in accordance with those I have long held myself. The following forcible words are extracted from the Dean's article in the *Sunday Magazine* of March, 1865, p. 415 :

"It is a common trick of those who deprecate all correction of our authorized version to charge those who publish abroad the necessity for such correction with *want of reverence for the sacred text*. It is strange that it has never occurred to them, that just in proportion to a man's reverence for the sacred text, will be his anxiety to see it brought as near as possible to its original purity. If the charge is justified anywhere, it is surely as brought against men who are contented day after day, and year after year, to read as the Word of God to others who have no means of judging for themselves, sentences which they must be aware form no part of that word. We are never told that when we have the power of putting God's truth into men's hands we are to abstain for fear of unsettling their minds, but one solemn thing we are told which bears directly on this subject: 'To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.'"

would lead us to conclude that if, after a lapse of years or centuries, critical knowledge of the originals should have greatly progressed, and if the English language should have attained a standard not quite reached at that moment, another advance in the same spirit ought to be conducted towards perfection; and another Translation, Comparison, and Revision diligently made. The present was not the first Authorised Version, and it only professed to be "one more exact Translation of the Holy Scriptures into the English tongue."* It was not considered at the time of its appearance perfectly satisfactory; and before it was half a century old another Revision was proposed though never commenced. For the last hundred and fifty years however its general faithfulness, its beauty and its excellencies, have been deservedly acknowledged and never more so than at the present moment. It is no contradiction to this, to say that the work is not so entirely fit as it might be made to the wants and the understandings of men of these days, though like many things good and great it was excellently adapted to the requirements, the ideas and the state of knowledge of our forefathers. For no slight cause certainly should a standard work which this pre-eminently is, a People's Book, be altered; and our very tastes would lead us to retain as much as possible of what is so time-hallowed and venerable; yet we must take heed lest our conservative tendencies lead us to perpetuate what is incorrect and wrong; lest if I

* Dedication to James I.

may so speak, by our traditions too long cherished, we make in some few cases even the word of God of none effect.

I know it may be asked and reasonably too why the present more than any preceding moment should be a good occasion for attempting a Revision? In part answer to this, it may be remarked that the work is more appropriate to our times than to those gone by, because the English language if not quite unalterably fixed, for perhaps it can never be tied down to an unimprovable and stereotyped finality, is in as settled a state as it can ever be expected to be brought to, at all events infinitely more so than at the date of our Translation. And whilst no one can refuse to admit that our Bible as we now have it did more than anything else for the fixing of the English language, the admission itself proves how very irregular the language was up to the time that Version was made. The next grand operation towards its settlement was the compilation of Johnson's Dictionary, the appearance of which I suppose may be taken as another philological epoch. But considerable changes have taken place since the laborious work of our great lexicographer was brought to completion. There are many words used by our best writers which are not to be found in his famous dictionary, and many words admitted by him have a different meaning now to that which he assigned to them.* It may be a consi-

* *E.g.* Many persons would be surprised to see the meaning that follows the word *Civilisation* in Johnson. If it be said, however, that it is not the same word as that spelt with a *z*, then I say that Johnson has not the latter very common modern term at all.

deration incomparably small with reference to the great objects for which a Revision should be undertaken, still it need not be left out of the question, that a new translation might have its use in advantageously settling our language. As the Bible of the last two or three centuries has done so much towards this, a Bible of our own days, now that the language has become so copious and regulated, might be hoped to prove a standard of English for all generations to come. At present, by our non-interference we are obstructing the progress of a beneficial settlement, inasmuch as we go on accustoming the people to some forms of speech not in modern use, and some which never were correct.

Every reader of the Bible must have noticed, indeed, that our present Version contains some passages which are perfectly unintelligible to the unlearned; and yet their meaning might now be made plain enough. We meet with some words quite obsolete, but there would be no difficulty at all in finding excellent substitutions. All this is obvious. But it may not strike everyone that in many parts there is a needless disregard of what may be called the *point* of the original, which is so completely overlooked that the ordinary English reader is quite debarred from the satisfaction he might often have of arriving at the full purport of a sacred writer's thoughts. Of course a person unacquainted with the original could not hope to get so far as that in some places where turns of great delicacy are involved, but much more might be done for him than is done as yet. I should not be making a complete

case without adding that there do exist passages, I do not know of more than two or three, where the translators in an endeavour to maintain consistency or in order to support a favoured doctrine seem even to have given a turn or a colour or an insertion not justified by the original.

Other qualifications which mark the present age and seem to point it out as peculiarly fitted for the work proposed, are the unquestioned advance of accuracy obtained in our knowledge of the habits and history of the people of the East, and of the geography and natural productions of the lands they live in ; also the progress that has been made in the critical study of the Scriptures. It would be difficult to name any studies that have received deeper attention latterly. What great things learning and research have accomplished in these directions ! What important discoveries have been made which were not dreamed of by the translators who so well employed their great talents in James the First's days ! Since their time what an array of learned scholars, some happily still living, have directed their talents and industry to the study of " various readings " and the examination and collation of ancient Codices ! It would of course be too much to say that they have indisputably settled what the Greek text ought to be in every part, but it is unquestionable that a much higher degree of accuracy has been attained than at any former period, and it may well be doubted if means are ever likely to be found for acquiring much greater certainty than exists

at present. If we wait till the text is absolutely fixed we shall probably have to wait till the end of the world; but who will say that sufficient progress has not been already made for all the purposes of a useful Revision.

The Scriptures, as far as we are concerned, may be likened to an ancient spring or stream of ever-living waters, the head and tributaries of which have their rise in distant lands. Supplies can therefore only be conveyed to our countrymen in vessels of human workmanship. We are using conduits of generally sound and good construction, but they are somewhat antiquated, and it is averred by many that the waters would be clearer, and would come to us not only as efficacious as ever, but with greater freshness and benefit, if, without rashly tearing up the old system of conveyance, improvements were adopted which God has given us the opportunity and the understanding to make. Is it reasonable to asseverate that certain good and skilful men, master-workmen though they were, who flourished two hundred and fifty years ago, were the only persons capable of constructing good means of communication? —was their particular age the only time in which such a work could possibly be executed? To speak more plainly, it may be said that in giving us the Scriptures, God has graciously intrusted to our occupation an exceedingly precious charge. He has been pleased to place in our hands something of inestimable and universal value: and yet we English of little faith are fearing what might be the consequences of

endeavouring to offer it to our countrymen with as much additional purity as thoroughly honest, though never perfectly spotless human hands, can ever hope to present it. We superstitiously fear any attempt to remove the imperfections with which man has formerly encumbered it, and the accumulated obscurities which lessen its value. We admit the existence of shortcomings and mistakes in our Version, but idly say they are of no importance—that there are no errors of consequence—none at least that affect what we chose to call “doctrine.” But have we any right to set ourselves up as judges of this? How can we dare to assert that there is no mischief in permitting the people to believe that even small parts of God’s message to man by the hands of his Prophets and Apostles mean one thing when we are fully aware that they mean another? What right have we to say that the people can see quite well enough whilst we are systematically hiding, or acquiescing in hiding, part of that light given by Almighty goodness and wisdom for the guidance of all?

It is however very remarkable that those who entertain the most uncompromising opinions respecting the unqualified inspiration of the Scriptures in every part should of all men be the most strongly opposed to a Revision. We should have judged that they would be most especially anxious to give to all the people with the utmost obtainable precision the meaning of the words by which alone, as they hold, we have a revelation from God. It would really seem that when they

speak of the inspired Word of God they are referring to our *English* Bible and not to the words in "*the original sacred tongues*" out of which it professes to be a translation.

I well know the excuses that are generally and I am sure honestly made for inaction. It is said for instance that worse errors than any that can be now complained of might be introduced designedly into a new Authorised Version. It amazes me that any man of sense could imagine the possibility of such a thing. If attempted it could have no chance of success. If anyone wished to trifle with us in a matter so solemn there are many things now existing that would infallibly check the execution of his plan. We cannot for a moment suppose that such a design could be carried out. Education is so generally diffused, there are so many critics ready to expose any imperfection—we may even say there are so many hundreds of persons in the middle classes with knowledge of Greek, if not deep enough for ascertaining the precise meaning of every phrase, yet sufficient for the comprehension of any discussion on the point—that any wicked attempt at deception would only recoil disastrously upon the men who could be so incredibly rash as to make it; and it must be remembered that these would be men selected on account of their eminence, learning and piety!

But the great stronghold in which the adversaries of improvement shelter themselves is raised out of the affectionate and apparently unalterable reverence of the English people for the present Version; and no one can

wish to deny a fact that speaks so well both for our people and for our English Bible. But whilst the existence of this affectionate regard ought not to excuse a perpetuation of deficiencies and mistakes in so important a matter, even though they were few in number which they can hardly be said to be, it does afford one very good reason amongst others for altering as slightly as possible what is so much prized. Everything should be sacrificed to truth and clearness, but it would not be difficult to insure ourselves against any merely rash or unnecessary innovations. Suppose a certain number of pious and learned men were selected for the work of revision, and it were made an unalterable rule in the constitution of the revising body that no one word of our present venerable Version should be disturbed unless three-fourths or even seven-eighths of a certain fixed quorum should consent to an alteration of the passage in which it was contained. Would not such a plan be a complete safeguard against any unnecessary meddling? The forcible language of our existing English Bible would be preserved in most cases in all its wonderful strength, whilst shortcomings would hardly escape being put right. Reconstructed with tender care from the old and precious materials, the Book would be in the main the same. It can scarcely be doubted that when the needful improvements were made they would soon meet with general approval. The people would soon be reconciled to them; if not quite at once, certainly in the next generation, which would grow up accustomed to them; and those who

are possessed of present influence would be cleared from the responsibility of sealing up words of God's revelation when it is a duty to present them as intelligibly and clearly as possible to the people. If we do what is right in this matter may we not safely leave the consequences to God? Reverence to the Scriptures and above all to Him by whose inspiration they came would be better shown by displaying them through a medium of the utmost possible purity than by continuing to dim their beauty and diminish their force by the retention of some errors and of some expressions which have now become coarse, which excite even to ridicule, or are certainly obsolete.

I may be reasonably asked for proofs of what I say. But there is a difficulty in this case attending the exhibition of any instances, because it may be said that if they are all that can be brought forward it is not worth while to disturb people's minds on account of them; and yet to display all that exist would be equivalent to undertaking the principal initiatory work of a Revision. I will not, however, be deterred from mentioning a few, but I must not be supposed to affirm that they are the most important that might be selected.

What can be got out of the English words in 1st Cor. iv. 4? Is it possible for any person, either ignorant or learned, to make any sense of them without resorting to a commentary or the original? But there would not be the least difficulty in making St. Paul's meaning here sufficiently obvious to everyone.

In Heb. x. 38—"The insertion of the words *any man*

has been justly objected to," says the Commentator Scott. Dr. Doddridge in his paraphrase renders what is translated in our version "but if any man draw back," "*yet if he draw back.*" Dr. Adam Clarke says, "The insertion of the words *any man*, if done to serve the purpose of a particular creed, is a wicked perversion of the words of God." In no list of various readings that I have access to can I find the insertion of the word *as* in this text. Our translators must have considered it necessary either to preserve some consistency between St. Paul's quotation and the Septuagint rendering of Hab. ii. 4 (as if the Scriptures could not take care of themselves), or to correct St. Paul's doctrine in the matter of final perseverance (as if the Scriptures had need of improvement). As the words are, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, there is no justification whatever for the insertion. It is, to be sure, put in italics; but it causes an entire misrepresentation of the meaning of the sacred writer.

In Rev. iv. 6, 7, 8, 9; v. 6, 14; vi. 1, 3; vii. 11; xiv. 3; xv. 7; xix. 4, the word (in its various cases) ζῷον, signifying a living creature, altogether admirable and lovely, is translated by the same English word "beast," as the word θηρίον, in Rev. xi. 7; xiii. 1, 11; xv. 2; xvi. 13; xvii. 8, 11; xix. 19; xx. 10, signifying a terrific ferocious animal, altogether detestable. It is no business of mine to say what the best rendering might be for the former. It certainly ought not to be *beast*, which in the present state of our language signifies a creature of dispositions anything but celestial,

and is perfectly appropriate for conveying the meaning of the latter word.

It would be easy to give other instances of words entirely different in Greek and of different meaning, translated with manifest detriment to clearness and to the full sense of a passage by the same word in English; but one or two more will suffice here. The differing words λούω and νίπτω are both translated *wash*.* Διάβολος equally with δαίμων and δαιμόνιον is translated *devil* (except when διαβολος is in the plural and refers to human beings, male or female, in which cases it is rendered *slanders*, 1 Tim. iii. 11, and *false accusers*, or in margin *make-bates*, 2 Tim. iii. 3, Tit. ii. 3), though διάβολος means *accuser*, *adversary*, characters in which *Satan* himself is represented, and δαίμων and δαιμόνιον a *demon*. Whatever the latter may be, which it is not for me to explain, I see no reason why the word *demon* should not be given in our Bible, so that people might understand that the sacred writers referred to very different beings when sometimes they spoke of a *demon*, and sometimes of him who is *the accuser* of the brethren, *Satan*, *the Old Serpent*, *the Devil*.

On the other hand, the instances are still more numerous where the same Greek word, case, tense, or particle, is rendered by a different word or in a different manner in English, not only without necessity, but with serious detriment to point and finish, and

* See *ante* some remarks on the passage referred to (John xiii. 5-10), in "Thoughts on the Lord's Prayer."

to the needless obscuration of the full meaning of the original. I will not detail the instances to be found in any good commentary where we miss the niceties of some grammatical turn or the force of some antithesis. It may almost suffice to bring forward the noted case in 1 Cor. xi., where *κρίμα* is unhappily translated *damnation* in v. 29, and, more correctly, *judgment* in v. 34. If this were the only case I could quote in this paper it would be sufficient to warrant a new Authorised Version, for who can calculate the pain and mischief that this unfortunately translated passage has occasioned. Another remarkable case occurs in Matt. xxv. 46, where the translators have been at the pains to neutralise the effect of what perhaps I may not irreverently term the forcible and intentional tautology of Our Lord, by translating the same word *αἰώνιον*, in the same verse, *everlasting* and *eternal*. I may also allude to an instance which does not appear very important at first sight. Few ordinary readers would imagine that the citation, Rom. xii. 19, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," was exactly the same in the original as that in Heb. x. 30, "Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense." Either rendering is equally good, but there is no occasion for variety. The great advantages of consistency were not so apparent to the translators of old times as they are to biblical scholars of the present day, and it does happen that a nice point (which it is needless to discuss here) respecting the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews is found by some modern critics to be involved in these two

quotations. Under this head I may also observe that, for any one not gifted with a very strong memory who strives daily to get a verse or two of Scripture by heart, the perfectly arbitrary and indiscriminate interchanges of prepositions and other small words and expressions cause much perplexity. Thus, where there is no variation in the Greek, and nothing whatever is gained by the change (often, too, in the very same verse), *unto* and *to* are both used—also *that* and *which*—and occasionally, *be* and *are*. This may seem a very trifling matter to some, but there is no reason why such variations should exist, and they add to the difficulties of those who like reverently to retain the very words of the Bible in their memories.

The verb “to will,” signifying “to have a mind to,” may be found in our Bible in combination with another verb, as if it simply put the latter in the future tense. Thus John vii. 17, means that when a man *wills to* do God’s will (that is, resolutely determines to do it) he shall know of the doctrine, &c. And Matt. xvi. 24, “If a man *wills* (that is makes up his mind) to come after me,” &c.; the force of the word *θέλω* being entirely lost in the present Translation.

Without presuming to discuss the question of *italics*, whether they should be preserved or not in an Authorised Version, it may be remarked that there are numerous inconsistencies with respect to their employment in our Translation. Whilst many words are put in *italics* as supplementary which could not possibly be dispensed with in any faithful rendering of the original, there are

cases where words are introduced without any indication of their having nothing to represent them in the Greek. Thus, it is only in those Bibles which are provided with marginal explanations that the ordinary reader would get the least intimation that in Acts ix. 2, *this way* is in Greek *the way*. And in Acts xix. 9 and 23, the very same form, except once a difference of case, is translated also with italics, *that way*.* Strangely enough, with complicated inconsistency, for once the translators *have* put the demonstrative pronoun in italics, namely in Acts xxiv. 22, though there the original expression is precisely the same as when rendered "this way" or "that way" without any italics at all. We probably have lost something by this meddling, for it has been well remarked that it can hardly be doubted, from the repeated employment of the term, that the expressive word, THE WAY, was in constant use among the early Christians as indicating the only possible way to perfect and eternal happiness and safety, and it might beneficially have come into use amongst us if the translators had not unfortunately taken upon themselves to alter it.

I am far from wishing to part with expressions of good English homely strength and plainness, yet as the ordinary signification of some words has greatly changed, it would be well to alter some of those which now carry a sense of coarseness, especially when better chosen ones would very much clear up the meaning of

* In Acts xxii. 4, the translation is correct, the pronoun *this* being given strongly in the original.

a passage. The translation of Matt. iii. 12 and Luke iii. 17 is, I think, a very unfortunate one; and however suitable and intelligible it may have been in our forefathers' days, I greatly doubt whether the young and uneducated, especially of our town populations, would have any clear idea on simply hearing it read, that the *cleansing* of a *threshing* floor by driving away the refuse was the image conveyed, or would understand what manner of instrument was meant by a *fan*. And how many good people who consider that the strength of glass is not diminished by the mere lapse of time, must be unnecessarily puzzled about the great importance of using new bottles instead of old, whereas if the word *ἀσκός* were translated *skin* or leathern bottle in Matt. ix. 17, and parallel passages, all would be plain. There is no occasion, either, for the idea of meanness which unavoidably connects itself with the taking out *two-pence*, and giving that, for some days' lodging and attendance at an inn. The same with paying a *penny* for twelve hours' work to those who had borne the burden and heat of the day. But why should not a *denarius* be called a *denarius*? The word might indeed be vague to an ordinary hearer or reader, but would not mislead; and its very vagueness would be quite consistent with the impression otherwise produced by the context that the payment was in every way adequate; or it might lead to inquiry which might result in obtaining the information that a *denarius* at that period in Judea would be liberal wages for a day's labour.

What an advantage it would be if the proper name of a man were always rendered in the same way throughout the Bible! Why should Jeremiah be sometimes Jeremias, and sometimes Jeremy? Isaiah sometimes Esaias? Hosea, Osee? Noah, Noe? Elijah, Elias? Elisha, Eliseus? Jephthah, Jephthah? Timotheus, Timothy? Judas, Jude? Joshua, Jesus? and Korah, Core? Some of these transformations are very arbitrary, especially when the same form of the original word is found for both varieties in the New Testament, and even in a single Evangelist.

There is one more passage which I have happened to note after proceeding thus far; and must take leave to mention it, because it appears to me that our translators have put therein what might prove a serious but needless stumbling-block to many. I refer to the translation of Ἐξομολογῶμαι σοι, *I thank Thee*, in Matt. xi. 25 and Luke x. 21. Finding the Greek verb so very different from that translated *thank* in other places, I determined to see how it is rendered elsewhere in the New Testament. It occurs in Matt. iii. 6, Mark i. 5, Acts xix. 18, Rom. xiv. 11, xv. 9, Phil. ii. 11, Jam. v. 16, and Rev. iii. 5, in all of which places it is translated *confess*: also in Luke xxii. 6, where it is translated *promise*. It is met with in no other places as far as I can ascertain. Now what a relief it would be to very many persons to read the word here as it is translated in other parts—to know that the merciful Son of Man is represented, not as saying, I thank Thee that true and saving knowledge is hid from any class of men, but as

submissively bowing in this respect with filial reverence to His Father's government of all things in Heaven and earth, and saying, *I confess to Thee, I acknowledge before Thee* that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. We can well believe that Our compassionate Lord thanked His Father that the humble and teachable were enlightened, but it need not be an indispensable article of faith to think of Him as *thankful* that even unrepenting and self-sufficient men were blinded. Accordingly it seems by what follows that this judgment, just though it was, was a thing not pleasurable to His human soul, for He dismissed the subject by expressing His filial acquiescence in words alike in sense to those He used when the last bitter cup was given Him to drink (Matt. xxvi. 42), "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." It is true we are told by St. Luke that Our Saviour rejoiced in spirit when uttering the sentence I have been alluding to, but His whole revealed character would lead us to believe that His joy was for the salvation of the meek and lowly in heart and not for the condemnation even of Chorazin' and Bethsaida and the impending fall of Capernaum.

I have taken all the foregoing examples from the New Testament, and it might be as well that the work of improvement should commence with that division of the Scriptures as being of more immediate importance to a Christian nation. The Old Testament, being in language discontinued in anterior times, would of course

present its difficulties to revisers, but they could not be nearly so great as those with which the translators so well and manfully struggled two hundred and fifty years ago. The few instances I have given from the New Testament commence with a reference to an unintelligible translation. And with respect to the Old Testament I shall content myself with asking if there is a person now living who can make sense of the words "And all to brake his scull" (Judges ix. 53)? This may be good ancient English, but modern English people have to read it now, and make what they can of it.

And whilst speaking of the Old Testament, I would remark how much better it would be if the great name which now bears the unfounded translation "the LORD" were always rendered "JEHOVAH" as it is in a few instances. It is certainly a proper Name and not a common noun. At present we lose the point of such verses as Ex. v. 2, and 1 Kings xviii. 21, "Who is JEHOVAH that I should obey his voice? I know not JEHOVAH." "If JEHOVAH be God follow Him, but if Baal, follow him."

A word may be said also on the subject of the *Headings* to the Chapters in our English Bible. They may be full of excellent theology, admirable little sermons, sometimes quite worth reading. But like many other sermons they by no means always stick to the text. Above one chapter, for instance, the first three sections of the heading are, *The promulgation of the Gospel; The preaching of John Baptist; The preaching of the*

Apostles. Now if a person of ordinary attainments were asked where he supposed a chapter with such headings was to be found, I think he would say it must be somewhere in the New Testament, though he might feel doubtful whether it were in the Gospels or the Acts. He would be excusably surprised to hear that such words and names could have got into the Old Testament and were to be found over one of the chapters in Isaiah. I am not offering an opinion as to whether the translators were right or not in considering that the words in the 9th verse of chap. xl, "O Zion that bringest good tidings," referred to *the preaching of the Apostles*. I am but claiming a right on the part of every Christian man to exercise his own judgment on the point if he likes. People go to the Bible to know what the Scripture says, not what men of one particular period or one particular set of opinions said centuries after the closing of the Sacred Canon; and it is to be feared that the headings bound up as they are by authority with the text do carry the weight of Scripture with them to some persons. At all events it is difficult to see how the distribution of Bibles with such interpolations can be called "the circulation of the Scriptures without note or comment." There is a heading in the New Testament which for aught that appears in the original is perfectly unauthorised, and has probably been the occasion of a gratuitous but permanent piece of injustice to the character of Mary Magdalen. It expressly and by name (over Luke vii.) identifies that loving and faithful follower of Our Lord

with the woman in the Pharisee's house who was "a sinner." Any one who had not looked into the matter would scarcely believe that the name Mary Magdalen does not appear at all in the chapter. And there are men of great learning who are convinced that the woman referred to as having led a disreputable life was certainly not Mary Magdalen. If there must be headings, they should be kept more to the point, in the way of a genuine index of contents. But probably no advantage would be lost by dispensing with them altogether.

The arrangement into Chapters and Verses is so ancient and universally recognised a division that it is to be apprehended that too much confusion would be occasioned by any interference with such an established system of notation and mode of ready reference. Yet the divisions are often exceedingly unfortunate; and whether they were made with a view of presenting portions of convenient length for reading in public or in private, or portions containing a comparatively complete statement or sense in themselves, as independent as could be under the circumstances, of what precedes or follows, they must be said to have failed in attaining their object; for their length is of excessive and inconvenient variety, and the divisions are often made with so little judgment as to be exceedingly prejudicial to the sense. A *Chapter* is read in church as a thing complete in itself. Thousands of good people read a *Chapter* every day or at a sitting, and think they have done all that is requisite in getting through it without troubling themselves to refer to

what precedes or to look on to what follows. I fear for instance the proportion of people is small who when they hear or read Matt xx. take the pains to look back to find out what the *For* with which it begins refers to. But the object of the generally ill-understood first sixteen verses would receive great light if that portion was connected with the last four verses of the preceding chapter; where Peter who had forsaken all and followed Christ, and the others of the teachers who had borne the burden and heat of the day, are both encouraged by a glorious promise and warned by the saying, "But many first shall be last, and the last first." In immediate connection with this encouragement and this warning the parable of "the Householder" appears perfectly appropriate and becomes satisfactory because intelligible. Thus read, it may strike our memories how the warning which precedes it, and with which it also closes, became a prophecy when Paul, born out of due time, the last of the Apostles, not meet to be called an Apostle, became the chiefest Apostle, and was chosen to perform services in promulgating the Gospel of Christ more distinguished in some respects than fell to the lot of any who were earlier called to the vineyard. To mention but one more instance, what can be a more curious, I had almost said senseless, break than that between the third and fourth chapters of the Epistle to the Colossians? Towards the close of the former, wives, husbands, children, fathers, slaves, are severally addressed. The Apostle had only one other class in his

list for a special word of exhortation, viz. : the masters; but they are cut off from the others in the third chapter, and made to figure by themselves at the head of the fourth, so as to make it seem that *masters* only were to continue instant in prayer, &c. ! All that could now be done perhaps in mitigation of the evils pointed out under this head would be to arrange any revised Translation into sections or paragraphs according to subject and meaning, without being bound by the old divisions; at the same time for convenience of reference relegating the numbers indicating the old Chapter and verse to the margin. Indeed "paragraph Bibles" already published have prepared the way for an improvement in this particular.

If the instances I have brought forward are not enough to prove my case, I cannot hope to convince anyone. I shall therefore now dismiss this subject with one or two general remarks. Whilst the most wonderful strides have been made in the study of history, and art, and commerce and science, in the course of the last two hundred and fifty years, biblical literature too has had its impetus and is not behind any of them in the race. It may remain to be seen whether the talent and originality possessed by the translators of our present Version are equally abundant and vigorous in their descendants of the present day or not. A trial might prove that there is no falling off: but however this may be, it is certain that biblical students now know many things of which their fathers were entirely ignorant. And it shows no want of affectionate regard for that

which has been both a blessing and an honour to our country, to wish to see reverently pruned away some decayed and useless twigs, and to have them replaced by congenial grafts from the parent trunk wherever increased beauty or fruitfulness could be given to the luxuriant boughs of that deeply rooted stock, our grand Old English Bible; which, from its first planting in the days of Wycliffe, had its seasons of progress towards maturity till the time when it last received pious culture; its various stages of growth being partly the cause and partly the effect of our glorious Reformation. Let those who have the power of doing this as a talent committed to them—I mean let our governing, our religious, our learned bodies—combine to charge themselves with this work; and then the people high and low, rich and poor together shall the more abundantly enjoy the good fruit.

II. The other matter which I should like to notice here is the desirableness of some Revision of certain parts of the Prayer Book, the fear of consequences which might follow any attempt at alteration, however moderate, being generally assigned as a sufficient reason for letting things liturgical remain as they are.

It is an incontestable fact that some alterations are strenuously and perseveringly called for; that no concession has been made to the demand; and that no promise even of future attention to it has been vouchsafed. If the demand is manifestly unreasonable this line of conduct is perfectly just, but if things are

asked which might be real improvements, or things by means of which but the single advantage could be gained of giving relief to the minds or consciences of many loving sons of the Church, then fear of consequences is a bad excuse for inaction, and may become I will not say a dangerous one—for I think it would take a great deal to upset the Church of England—but at all events a very prejudicial one to the interests of that Establishment.

It would be doubtless absurd to propose that the Church should sacrifice her scriptural Forms which she has so beneficially employed for ages, and without which she would hardly be recognised, merely for the sake of retaining or attracting men, however excellent they may be, who object on principle to Forms of Prayer. No more could one suppose or wish that the Church should make Infant Baptism an open question for the sake of winning to herself those Christians who strangely call themselves Baptists, though they acquiesce in the departure from this life of no inconsiderable part (sometimes) of their families, unwashed in what St. Paul calls the laver of regeneration, dedicated to God by no holy office or ministry. Neither would it be reasonable to wish for openings in the Church of England for any who object to Episcopacy, or her connection in temporal matters with a controlling national government. I think I need say nothing about those who style themselves Unitarians, or those who cannot express their belief in every one of the grand doctrines of Christianity of which the Creeds called the Apostles' and the Nicene are exponents, or

those who cannot acquiesce in the services provided for that part of the congregation which remains after the ordinary prayer and sermon to partake of the Lord's Supper. For the Church must either maintain some recognised constitution or cease to be a Church at all.

It is the case, however, that there are men to whom the above-mentioned objections would not apply, who do separate themselves because there are a few things connected with the observances, practices or formularies of the Church which they do not altogether admire or like. I greatly doubt whether such persons, who are sometimes men whose faith and works would dishonour no Christian communion, ever find anything better than what they leave behind them, or anything so well calculated for general and permanent usefulness. They act according to the dictates of their conscience, and so far do right, but it is very problematical whether they can obtain in their new connection that satisfaction for which they sacrifice so much. Perhaps they might with advantage have remembered that it is vain to look for anything wholly, or even partly, human without blemish of some sort; that nothing can be perfect which in its constitution necessarily receives the co-operation of man. When we think of the Communion of Saints we must try to grasp in idea something very large and extended indeed. There are millions of Christians here below who form part of it, and it cannot be expected that all of them should regard every minute matter in the same light. And no good thing can be offered to us here which has not some drawbacks. One

thing must be taken with another. Too close a regard to the letter may kill, while the spirit would give life. It is true that there shall be presented at length to the Lord a glorious Church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that will not be till the Holy City, New Jerusalem, comes down from God out of heaven as a bride, prepared for her husband, the perfected workmanship of Christ. But here we shall never show a faultless Church, because it must be in measure the fruit of man's labours, a branch of man's planting. Though we ourselves do not find everything exactly as we could wish, we may yet have better security than anywhere else under the wide-spread shelter of our noble National Church: which declares that all things necessary for salvation may be read in Holy Scripture, and provides Services fraught with Gospel truth, with the spirit of love to God, and of charity to man. Few indeed of those who leave it would renounce allegiance to the government of their native land merely because all its laws and regulations did not merit their entire approval. They might fairly try to have those laws altered without engaging in a civil war or emigrating if they did not succeed.

But we must look at facts as they exist, and if the considerations just detailed have any merit it is evident their weight is not appreciated by all. For some men do unquestionably leave the Church whom it would be creditable to retain; many men refrain from joining it whom it would be very creditable to receive; and very many useful, laborious, and excel-

lent men who, fortunately for the Church, remain at their posts in the ministry, can only lull their scruples without ever being able to get rid of them—they always feel the weight of their burden though they resolve not to desert their work. Now if we leave speaking of the two former classes, though it is lamentable that the Church should be deprived of their services, yet we may well ask ourselves if it is advisable or profitable that the minds of the good men in the last category should be kept continually in a state of disquiet by internal questionings, and the unfeeling taunts of adversaries without? Is such a state of things a necessary evil? Is it not possible, without undermining any of the fundamental principles of the Church, to achieve such moderate alteration as may beneficially enlarge its pale and remove the bonds which are galling to some of its faithful servants? Has it not become a duty to endeavour to do this, and ought fear of consequences to be allowed to prevent our making the attempt?

If there were some noble and venerable edifice that we should be grieved to see destroyed or even in the least degree injured, that we prized not only for its antiquity and beauty but for the blessed shelter it afforded to ourselves and neighbours, and for some incalculable benefit that all might share who met within its walls, would it not be an act of good taste and proper feeling, as well as of real charity, to clear away from before its portals any stones that incumbered its approaches and served as stumbling-blocks to those

who but for them would gain the entrance? Would it not be a sign of reverential regard to remove any unnecessary load from its superstructure which tended to weaken it rather than to contribute to its strength? Would it not show good judgment to take down some partition wall raised for a temporary object, but now found to interfere with its unity of design and to intercept a general view of its noble proportions, and unpleasantly to separate the assembly within into distinct bodies? Could not all this be done in a loving and tender spirit for the sake of preservation and not of demolition?

Though I have stated that the alterations that could be reasonably wished for are few in number, yet a short paper like the present is not the place for entering into a detail of them. But there is one thing that I cannot entirely refrain from noticing here. It has surprised me greatly that no efficient steps should have been yet taken towards procuring the alteration of an expression or two in the Order for the Burial of the Dead. That Service I look on as one of perfect beauty. But can any one honestly deny that a few words it contains are painfully inappropriate in many cases in which it is used? Most officiating clergymen may succeed even in extreme instances in giving to such passages a sense in their own minds which they are far from bearing ostensibly, else they could not, as truthful and Christian men, pronounce them as indiscriminately as they do; and it is a very remarkable thing that at clerical meetings where the subject is discussed, a resolution of

acquiescence in things as they are is usually arrived at. It was stated, too, on the very highest authority in the House of Lords last summer,* that "probably four-fifths of the Clergy are satisfied with the Burial Service as it is." If we may, then, dismiss the case of the remaining one-fifth of the whole body of English Clergy as an infinitesimal number whose scruples are not worth troubling ourselves about—if we find no cause for making alterations for the sake of relieving the consciences of officiating Ministers, inasmuch as they do not seem to feel the injury—yet it becomes a serious question whether some change ought not to be made *for the sake of the people in attendance* at funerals. For according to the ordinary meaning of words the common folk at least must understand the Minister to state his solemn belief that the deceased has "gone to heaven." What other meaning can they attach to his words when they hear him, after invoking "The most holy, most mighty Lord, who knoweth the secrets of our hearts," affirm that "it hath pleased Him of His great mercy to take unto Himself the soul of the dear brother here departed," and proceed to give hearty thanks to God "for that it hath pleased Him to deliver our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world?" Yet perhaps the same clergyman has been telling the same people Sunday after Sunday that there are only two roads for their choice, one leading to heaven the other to hell—that there is no middle way—that there are only two classes of persons in God's sight, the converted and the unconverted—that being baptised in

* Session of 1864.

infancy, leading a commonly honest life, abstaining from gross sins, attending church and even partaking of the Holy Communion, cannot any of them, or all together, avail to save their souls without something else which he preaches to them. On every recurrence, then, of an equivocal or it may be glaringly bad case, how can the flock be prevented from thinking there must be a fallacy somewhere—that either in the church or in the churchyard what their Pastor says is not true? Why should they not be expected to decide in the way most assuring to themselves as to which statement they should accept? Will not most of them say that *they* shall certainly be well enough at the end, because they are at least as good as the poor fellow just buried? Studious persons who have taken pains to look into the history of the Prayer Book may know how certain expressions came to be used, and what the real intentions of the Church originally were with respect to the employment of the Burial Service. But a knowledge of circumstances that existed hundreds of years ago can never justify the continuance of practices and language, however well adapted to ancient conditions, if they are questionable, and often false, now that those old things have passed away. There are such things as legal fictions, but we are progressively abolishing even them. Let not our clergy show a blinder love for the obsolete than our lawyers do. For fictions must not be allowed in a matter so serious as religion. And it avails nothing to say that if discipline were restored the Burial Service would be all right, for there is no

chance, even the most remote, of discipline ever being restored in the sense indicated. And far be it from any friend of the Church to wish to throw on the Clergy the awful responsibility, which would be as intolerable for themselves as for the people, of passing judgment on the eternal state of any man who has gone before the Supreme Judge of all. No clergyman should have the power of making the slightest difference in the Service over the bodies of any persons that he might reasonably believe had received any form of Christian Baptism. But I should like to see the General Service slightly altered, so that the strongest declarations might be made respecting the certain happiness of those who have died in the Lord, and the most hearty thankfulness expressed for their blessedness, but so that no opinion or appearance of opinion should be passed officially respecting the state of the individual deceased. There will be quite as much consolation as at present for mourners who have real grounds for taking it. But even if not, we must recollect that Christianity always places the eternal above the temporal joy; and that however we might like to comfort others, it should neither be done by the sacrifice of truth and a weak desire to please men's feelings, nor at the expense of their most important interests hereafter.

Another thing frequently discussed I cannot speak of in so conclusive a way. Complaints are occasionally made of the tiresome length of our regular Church Service on Sunday mornings; and perhaps in some instances a separation of the various parts, which were

not originally intended to be joined together, might be suitable for the poor or the weak who are unable to devote the time or attention demanded by a two hours' service. On the other hand, to take a very low ground, I think the custom of steady attendance in our long Services has not been without its beneficial effect on English character. Supposing even nothing better is gained, our very habit of remaining for two hours at stated times in a decorous posture and of listening without the outward betrayal of any desire of interruption to the lengthened discourse of a man with whom one cannot always perfectly agree, must have its effect on habituating Englishmen to regularity, self-control, order and steadiness. And though every sermon may not be impressive, there are few indeed from which much good may not be extracted; and the line upon line, precept upon precept, Sunday after Sunday, have their gradual influence on the general body of church-goers. We do not rush in excited crowds, as they do to a sermon on the Continent, only when some great intellectual treat is prepared. No doubt they have there an occasional banquet, but it may be hoped we flourish better in England with our homely and regular meals. It may be a question however, whether preaching might not here in some cases be made a distinct study, an avocation entirely separate from the ordinary round of parochial duties and ministerial routine.

I may remark in conclusion that it would be a humiliating and deplorable admission for our Church

to make before the world that a few alterations however desirable must not be had because the mere setting about them would necessarily occasion the display of bitterness and angry feeling amongst its chief men; yet the Church must either make some such excuse or else go on injuring the minds of many estimable adherents, and alienating many more who would be glad otherwise to be devoted members or faithful friends. I am certain that there is, after all, amongst the various parties whose principles seem at first sight so diametrically opposite, a greater agreement than is generally imagined about the Way of Salvation. However they may dispute about words they all hold fast the Head. Whatever may be the form of the leaf or colour of the blossom, the fruit in either case proves that the tree is good. Whatever may be the names that men please to give them, whether they are called High or Low, exemplary and self-denying works prove the genuine faith of both. I cannot believe then that forbearance and concession are qualities or attainments impossible to the earnest Clergy. For both will be wanted. Forbearance to remind everyone that other good men may praise the very things that he wishes were different, and the spirit of concession to persuade every man not to force on his brethren in Christ declarations which can only be *painfully*, because if not unconscientiously, at least *equivocally*, made. There is so much the more reason for this concession, so much the less need of these collective declarations, because every clergyman has the acknowledged right of interpreting the doctrines of the

Church according to his own private sentiments, I may almost say individual propensities. In his preaching he may make what declarations he pleases, provided they are not most plainly and diametrically opposed to what is found in the Prayer Book. No real friend of the Church desires to see it narrowed. All parties in it must wish for its aggrandisement. With a true and enlightened regard for the catholic objects for which it was founded, many impediments to its expansion may be removed.

This paper has treated of two important projects which I think are highly desirable. But it is said there are peculiar difficulties which would interfere with their accomplishment at the present moment. There may be. But there are also peculiar facilities which should induce us not to let present opportunities pass away. Not to repeat what has been hinted about the assistance that might now be rendered by criticism, science and general knowledge, it may be said that there never was a period when so much attention was directed to the improvement, temporal, moral and spiritual, of mankind. There never was a time when religious matters excited so much earnest discussion. That some opposition should show itself cannot then be wondered at, but it may be confidently hoped there is more inquiry than unbelief. Men now want what is real and good. Excuses precisely similar to those made about the Revision of the English Bible and Prayer Book were honestly put forth with reference to

every proposed improvement which has been accomplished of late years ; but all the predicted dangers have vanished into nothing, and we are reaping only the benefits, in the well-being, contentment and loyalty of our population. There never was a time in which peculiar difficulties did not exist to oppose the accomplishment of every great and good work. But, as saith the Preacher, “ He that observeth the wind shall not sow ; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.”

IV.

THOUGHTS UNDER TEMPTATION TO
DESPONDENCY.

How many Christian persons there certainly are who from time to time pass through seasons of distress and doubt! What numbers of good men find it hard to understand why God contends with them, and are completely foiled in their efforts to account to themselves for their own troubles! How overwhelmed they feel at times with the burden of their peculiar misfortunes! How depressed by a conviction of their own uselessness in the world, and of their utter inability to set even a few small matters right or to make people about them so much as admit that certain objectionable things require any remedy or reform whatever! How often they see their wishes and aims perseveringly misrepresented (so at least they think), and their exertions counteracted! There are sad moments when it seems to them that all the foundations of the earth are out of course. Disappointment has made their perceptions gloomy for a time. There are periods when they can look on things only from the dismal point of view to which they have been forced

to retreat ; and then they would fain persuade themselves that modesty always meets with neglect, delicacy with blank inattention, that earnestness only excites derision, and that to be persevering is but to be reckoned very troublesome. Happy those to whom temperament or circumstances accord immunity from seasons of such gloom and misery ! But as for the good man who tastes the bitterness of these things, to what can he look for comfort ? Hurt by the loss of self-respect, uneasy in mind, perhaps weary in body and suffering from outward troubles or losses, vexed, too, because he cannot induce his friends to join him in opposing evils which he fancies their concurrence might help him to overcome, cast down and all but destroyed, he vainly remembers days of old, when in misfortunes and pains he could say, " All these things are working for my good." He thinks perhaps with fond regret of times that are past, of trust and confidence which he feels convinced can never return ; times in which, whilst even under scorn and rebuke, his eye could pour out its tears unto God ; in which, though greatly distressed, he could still, like David, encourage himself in the Lord. But now (a heavy addition to his burdens), seduced perhaps by the subtilties of philosophy, falsely so called, or bewitched like the foolish Galatians, he has been sorely tempted to leave the simplicity of the Gospel, to question the stability of the foundation on which he used to think himself securely established. In his weakness he wearies himself with efforts to justify the ways of

God to man. He is foiled sometimes by the difficulty of reconciling what he believes to be the truth of Scripture with what he thinks he plainly reads in the book of nature or hears in the voice of history. Uncertain about the way of safety, and with sight dimmed by doubt, he can see no hills to which he may lift up his eyes for help. He cannot warm himself with the sparks that he had kindled. He begins to wish that he could cancel all that he had ever done. Or, as to begin life again were impossible, he longs to be carried to some distant part where none had ever known him, where he might go quietly along with the stream on the tranquil waters of ease, where no one should induce him to wage an unequal war with what he calls prejudice and obstinacy; where, as he knows that freedom from pain is positive happiness to those who have been under torture, he would gladly content himself with the negative enjoyment of being unnoticed to the end of his days, and abandon all remote chances of honourable reputation, for the sake of the quietude which can fall to the lot only of the unobserved. Unavailing, futile wishes! No wings of a dove may be given to hasten his escape from the stormy wind and tempest. His work is in this world, and here he must stop and bravely do it. It is not yet for him to fly away and be at rest. He knows this perhaps and struggles on. But he feels that he is vainly toiling through a sea of difficulties. Powerless against the breaking surge and blinding storm, small hope he has of hearing the winds and the waves re-

buked. He can but very faintly recognise the voice of One whose way is in the sea and whose path is in the great waters, saying, "Come!" but he feels that he could no more advance towards Him across such deep waves as those which open in dismal blackness at his feet, than the terrified Peter unassisted by the Almighty arm could walk on the water to go to Jesus. His faith is nearly failing, he almost wavers, he fears that he shall really now begin to sink.

Thus it is with the poor troubled man who takes counsel in his soul. He has sorrow in his heart daily. But must the enemy always triumph over him? Can his eyes never be lightened again lest he sleep the sleep of death?

How apt we are, even as mere spectators, in the height of some fearful storm, when the waters are being poured out as if the windows of heaven were opened and the blast of the tempest is bending or even breaking the trees of the field—how apt we are to fancy that the mischief which such rain and wind are doing must be irreparable! How we think of the good soil that is being washed off the hills and carried away uselessly to the ocean by the torrents that are hurrying on to find their level there, of the plains that are being covered with the drowning floods, of the ships that are being dashed on to the rocky coasts or stranded on the intervening shoals! It is difficult then to avoid asking ourselves if it can ever again be worth the husbandman's time and labour to cast his good seed on those now impoverished slopes, or to cultivate those swampy

flats? Will anyone be found to assure the safety of another cargo across the dangerous sea? Will a sailor ever again risk his life in serving in a ship that must be exposed to its storms? Such questions may have passed through our minds whilst the tempest was bewildering us, but facts have soon proved how futile they were. Many more vessels have ridden out the gale or found a port of safety than those that have perished. The business of the farmer, the adventurer and the mariner are not put a stop to. They all persevere. The sailor who has just escaped with bare life immediately seeks an engagement in another ship. The underwriter finds that his calculations come right on the average, and that his gains exceed his losses. In a few days or even hours the sea is covered again with sunbeams and sails, and the next time we visit its shores we may see in the offing the great low black steamers steadily dividing the waters, leaving each astern its league of smoke, a not unsightly distant horizontal cloud poised in the breezeless sky. And in a few weeks all traces of the storm in the country will be covered over. We may soon find the hill green with promise again, and the plain yellow with the riches of abundant crops.

So also for the desponding man. If he can but maintain his integrity, he may yet again find cause to sing unto the Lord. Let him but try to hold fast the beginning of his confidence steadfast to the end, and though he has suffered damage he may discover how he may repair it or endure it; though he is in a great

straight he may after some patience see a way of escape. A man may find the world too much for him, but he may nevertheless overcome it. How? By attending to what St. John says in his Epistle, "Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

As a general thing, the Epistle of John, and parts also of his reports of Our Lord's discourses, are strange and abrupt to many ears. There is a want of sequence and pertinence, apparently, which renders them somewhat difficult. His Epistles especially have a sort of unattractiveness to those who love a continuous flow of ideas or a lucidly put argument. They contain no poetic melody or triumphant reasoning like the renowned thirteenth and fifteenth of 1st Corinthians, or parts of the noble Epistle to the Hebrews. And yet the Bible of many a simple-minded and of many an experienced Christian opens almost spontaneously at the Gospel or Epistle of St. John. In natural things we often grow fondest of that which is not at first sweet to our taste, and the strongest and most cultured mind may have humble perseverance well rewarded in digesting the writings of the beloved Apostle. In the very text just quoted the necessary connection is not at first obvious between overcoming the world and believing in the Divinity of Jesus Christ. Yet here the desponding man finds an offer, as it were, of the very thing wanted, and he has no right to despair till he has made an honest trial of it.

The fact is, man can have no good, sure hope, no

solid comfort whatever, apart from the Gospel; and the Gospel has no vitality apart from the Divinity of Our Lord. St. John's words may be better understood when we reflect that it is of the first importance for men who wish for some benefit, to have the power of answering in the affirmative when the question is put by one who proposes to confer the desired good, "Believe ye that I am *able* to do this?" Who but they that would reply, "Yea, Lord," to such a question from Christ can be expected to overcome their troubles and fight successfully with their difficulties in the certain hope of final deliverance? Now, St. John has a persistent plan in his writings, and gives us no room to doubt of the power of the Saviour, for his Gospel states very clearly the oneness of Christ with the Almighty Father. He tells us in the plainest way "The Word was God." As errors had arisen before his Gospel appeared, he took care that it should contain the most explicit assertions of Christ's Divinity. But the other and earlier written Gospels abound also in proofs, though not in direct statements, of the same thing. There are parts of the first chapters of St. Matthew and of St. Luke from which I think no other conclusion can be drawn; but without stopping to examine them, we may pass on to notice some of the sayings of Christ Himself. Take for instance those gracious words which ever since they were uttered have been the solace of some troubled disciples, and are indeed most peculiarly adapted for the comfort of the anxious and desponding man, "Come unto ME all ye

that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." How could the very greatest of mere men have said this? How would it sound from the mouth of David, Elijah, Isaiah, Daniel or Paul? Which of them would have had the presumption to utter such words? And remark that Christ in His teaching says not, "Thus saith the Lord." Meek and lowly as he was, yet when He taught He showed that He was One "having authority" to give laws in His own Name. He bound His disciples and the world with the words, "I say unto you." What prophet or mere righteous man could ever have said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together!" What possible object could anyone not qualified by infinite atoning merit and by the Godlike possession of life in Himself have in saying, "Take, eat, this is *my* body," "Drink ye all of this, for this is *my* blood," "Lo, I am with you unto the end of the world." And even in St. John's Gospel we find also such incidental and apparently undesigned proofs, "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life," "I am that bread of life," "I will raise him up at the last day," "If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink."

Not only because we read it in the Scriptures of truth, or because St. John says it, but as a self-evident thing, we know that we must be without solid comfort and overcoming strength unless we believe that Christ, who spoke such words, is the Son of God. For if He did not proceed from God, it is evident that He

spoke not the truth ; we cannot now look to him as a present Help, we cannot trust in Him as a prevailing Intercessor ; there is nothing to prevent our being overcome with the attractions or miseries of the world. Finite and fleeting they both are, but both are too strong for the weakened forces of fallen man's unaided resistance.

But the perplexed, disconsolate man may say, "It is my earnest wish to be able to admit all this ; you have mentioned the very things I should be rejoiced to believe. But I feel hindered ; for your proofs all come from Scripture, and I find many parts in the Bible which I cannot understand : indeed Scripture seems in some places to contradict itself ; and then too the Book of Nature and what you call the Book of God do not always agree, so that I do not see how the Bible can have come from an Omniscient God, from the Almighty Creator of all things." Such objections are in the mouths of some now, and are doubtless in the minds of many more. To part of them it is a sufficient answer that it is not to be expected that in our present state of being we should understand all mysteries and know the deep things of God. If the Scriptures were always on a level with our limited comprehensions we should hardly look upon them as a revelation from the Most High. But this consideration, important as it is, and too frequently overlooked perhaps, will not entirely meet the case, for it will hardly dispose of apparent self-contradictions. The answer may be allowed its full weight as far as applicable, but there will yet remain

parts of the Bible which can be pointed out as things which cause honest, serious and too often fatal doubts to many an anxious mind.

Such doubts ought to be judiciously treated and candidly met. But can any one who uses his means of observation and exercises his judgment say that they are so treated and met on the part of some who come noisily forward to defend the truth of Scripture? Is it not obvious that when an answer is not to the point, or is not perfectly open, it only increases a doubt? A man who resolutely shuts his eyes to any particular set of facts can hardly be expected to command the confidence of another who thinks he has reason to be convinced of their truth and significancy. It may be too true that some who make it their business to study nature are apt to make light of the Holy Scriptures; but I fear it is equally true that many who make it their business to study the Holy Scriptures, and whose office it is to explain them, shut their eyes too much to things they might clearly read in the Book of Nature. Is there but one channel that God has chosen for the display of his power and attributes? Has He not in fact been pleased to make a double revelation of Himself, one by His holy Prophets and the writers of the Scriptures, the other by His wonderful works in creation? Can we possibly have an adequate degree of the knowledge of Him without using our opportunities of studying *both* these revelations? By regarding only one and declining to look into the other, we may form not only erroneous but injurious ideas of

God. Beyond question the Scriptures tell us that which it is most important for us to know—the love of God to man manifested through His Son. But if there are two revelations, or rather two means of revelation, must not that by nature be in these days the more perfect of the two? This may seem a startling question, but it must be remembered I am not speaking of these revelations as they come direct from God Himself, but *as they are now presented to us*. We may see nature absolutely in the condition in which it pleased the Creator to make it, or affected only by His divine decrees or the laws which His wisdom gave for its regulation or for its adaptation to our use in the present day. We may examine it in conditions which the puny powers of man could never affect in the minutest degree. And its records, though sometimes hard to decipher, when ascertained are sure. They come to us transcribed by no hands liable to error or misguidance. Whilst, quite differently from this, the Scriptures reach us through a human and therefore an imperfect medium. Each part of them, as it came from God's inspiration, was moulded by the men through whose hands it passed, into a shape suited more especially for the people of their own locality and their own age, for people whose habits we know but little about, and with whose ideas we have now little in common. There are things in Scripture, as well as in nature, hard to be understood. Yet if we will view its general scope even from its earliest records we may from Scripture learn lessons uniform from

first to last on communion with God, submission to His will, faith, hope and obedience ; which were saving and necessary truths in old times, as they will be to the end. What must have been the fittest vehicle in the earlier period of human existence for the conveyance of those divine lessons, it cannot possibly be for us now to decide ; and if the truths of nature, now gradually and surely coming to light, make it absolutely necessary for us to refer more of these early sacred teachings to symbol than we used to do, or are even now willing to do, we must submit, and must beware of contending for their literal exactness against indisputable evidence, lest haply in so doing we be found to fight even against God, who both ordained the course of nature and formed the mind of man. It is an unworthy thing to oppose well-ascertained truths because they present in some things an idea of the Almighty differing from the conception we had been fondly accustoming our minds to cherish before. The adjustment of the bearings of the two Revelations, the one to the other (by Scripture and by nature), may be the laborious work designed by Providence for this age. It will certainly be a difficult and trying work, for there is much of former carelessness and error to be rectified and atoned for. Let us set about it with faith, and it may please God to lessen our despondency and bring us well out of the trial. The next generation, if not our own, may reap the benefit of our struggles. If we consider how often nature is referred to in Scripture, and even displayed to us as a means of increasing our knowledge of God,

we shall hardly be inclined to thwart the work of those men who, by its diligent examination, are interpreting to us the records of the Universe. Judging by an example set by St. Paul, we might almost go so far as to think that a proper way of commencing to preach the Gospel to the idolatrous heathen may be by directing them to learn of God by noting the operation of His hands in the course of nature. Yet it behoves us to be humble and to avoid rashness and precipitancy ; for the facts of natural history and physics are by no means clearly ascertained ; and men of science, though they go on correcting some mistakes almost as old as the human mind, go on also making fresh ones themselves. They, as well as theologians, have their disputes.

I think the mischievous error of many good people of the present day consists in their saying, " Give up any one point stated in the Bible " (however disconnected it may be with Christian doctrine or the rules of Christian practice) " and you give up all—hold all these things which we call truths of the Bible or you abandon the faith of Christ." This is a fearful thing to say, because some men are too ready for an excuse to give up religion ; and others, to whom Christ's religion is a very precious thing, and who feel that they should be nothing without it, are made disconsolate. Must we abandon our hope of eternal life if we find that in some things the teaching of the Book of Nature is entirely and irreconcilably contrary to what we have been accustomed to accept as the teaching of the Scriptures? Ought we not rather to take comfort by concluding that either we

have mistaken, in the latter, figures for facts ; or that we do not rightly distinguish God's message from the medium by which it was conveyed ; or that we do not correctly appreciate the scope of ancient phraseology and modes of thought and expression ; or that even where the writers did intend to communicate real facts (I do not say to teach principles or doctrines) they may as human and therefore imperfect creatures have fallen into some errors of statement ? With respect to the great saving truths of our religion, the mysteries of redemption and the blessed hope of everlasting life, the Gospel trumpet gives us no uncertain sound. I feel very sure that the inspiration communicated by the Holy Spirit to the sacred writers was very highly above the inspiration said to be vouchsafed to good or eminent men in general, both in quality and degree, as much so as the power of predicting very distant events exceeds sagacity, and as the Apostles' gift of working miracles exceeds the greatest power that man can of himself exercise over nature. But even the highest gifts of inspiration do not seem to have neutralised human infirmity. Peter, some time after the most memorable of all Pentecosts, "*dissembled so as to carry away* even Barnabas on a most important point. St. Paul admits that his fellow-preachers and himself were "earthen vessels;" and though he unquestionably claims the attention and obedience of the Churches as due to his authority as an Apostle, yet his Epistles do not by any means always indicate a supernatural certainty as to *facts*. St. John speaks of an

unction from the Holy One and a knowledge of all things ; but these, he said, were shared by those to whom he wrote ; and yet his own Epistles prove that the early Christians were subject to very serious errors. And he himself seems to have demanded attention and belief scarcely so much on the ground of superhuman infallibility as of his own actual opportunities of direct knowledge—because his eyes had seen and his hands had handled the Word of Life—because, having personally witnessed that of which he bore record, his testimony was in the ordinary course of things unexceptionable.

It is evident from the quotation by the Evangelists and Apostles from the ancient Scriptures that the inspired Christian writers had no unreasonable respect for the letter of the Old Testament. It is well known that some of their quotations do not agree precisely with either the Hebrew text or the Septuagint—others agree with the Septuagint in cases where it differs more or less from the Hebrew, and *vice versd*. But how could this have happened if both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament were verbally inspired ? No one will now credit the old myth of the inspiration of the Septuagint, I suppose. Yet the New Testament writers quoted from it rather than from the Hebrew original whenever it suited their purpose better. This conduct needs no excuse ; they very rationally employed the Septuagint version so often as the only form in which the Scriptures were known at all to the Gentiles, and that in which they were best known to

many of the Jews, particularly to such of them as dwelt in strange lands. But the mere fact of the Apostles having stamped with their authorisation those and other deviations, slight as they might be, goes far to prove that they were not so scrupulous about words and phrases as they must have been had they believed in direct verbal inspiration. Of course they possessed an authority in such matters which no one now can pretend to, but not even in their times could it be possible that one infallible authority could differ from another equally infallible. Are we not forced therefore from these considerations to conclude that we cannot refer precise words and phrases in the Bible to infallible authority at all? I write this with a wish the very reverse to that of disparaging the sacred volume. Would that we understood it better than we do, for then we should be the more able to apply its divinely given instructions and examples to ourselves.

And it may not be altogether foreign to the design of this paper to observe that though it is impossible for us to be sufficiently sensible of the inestimable value of the precious gift that God has made to us in the Scriptures, it must be remembered that the advantage now generally enjoyed by our population of being at all times able to read them is comparatively quite a modern one. It did not always please God that the members of His Church in this or any land should have the means of personally resorting to the Bible whenever requiring instruction, comfort and guidance. And yet it would be a dreadful thing to say that no spiritual

life existed for many ages after Christ, except amongst those who had wealth enough to possess copies of the Scriptures and erudition enough to decipher them. The learned and successful labours of our translators, of which cheap printing gives us the full benefit, have placed in our own hands peculiar privileges; but it may be useful at times to imagine things we can never realise—the position of the good men of former days who were without them. An inconsiderate habit leads us who have been used to them from infancy to regard them as matters of course, as much so as the air we breathe and the water we drink, and we are too apt to fancy even that the Church under the Old Covenant, as well as the whole of Christendom at all times, enjoyed them also. Certainly under the *Old Dispensation* the inaccessibility of the Scriptures, such as they were, must have been very great indeed. I suppose that for many ages, practically, as to the mass of the people, Scripture did not exist. We must remember that up to the times of the later Jewish Kings it is evident that scarcely any of it *could* have been written beyond the books of Moses and Joshua, and perhaps Judges; and that even those parts should have been in the hands of the general body of the people, no one I imagine who reflects at all can possibly believe. There was a provision that *the King* should take steps to be well acquainted with the contents of the book of the law; but even this ordinance seems to have been entirely neglected, and from the excitement felt in the time of Josiah at the

finding of the "Book of the Law of the Lord given by Moses," and the surprise occasioned by its contents, we are led to conjecture that the writings of Moses themselves may have been lost for centuries before that providential discovery. But I do not by any means believe that for all that time the people had been without the "Word of God." For the Word of God is never bound. In those days when no one thought that Divine communication consisted in the transcription of certain histories and letters, God left not Himself without witness, but kept alive the knowledge and sense of religion, in measure by the ordinances of the Tabernacle and Temple, and the instructions of the Priests and Levites, but most emphatically by prophetic vision, and inspiration of the orders of Seers and Prophets who, either directly or by intermediate agency of the Colleges of the Prophets, communicated the "Word of God" to the people. Though the times were times of ignorance, though the place was dark, yet "the word" of prophecy could and did shine, even then and there. And I must repeat my opinion, which I think any one may say is well founded who will examine the Old Testament, that certainly at least up to a very late date the expression in the Bible "the Word of God" does not mean the histories of Moses and annals of the House of Israel, but communications from above by vision or divine inspiration direct to Prophets and Seers. Such inspiration David knew something of in his own personal experience. How sorry then was I once to hear the discourse of an earnest and faithful

clergyman, on Psalm cxix. 140, who thought he had demonstrated the truth of every syllable of our Bible by showing how David said "Thy word is tried to the uttermost" (marg. and Prayer Book v.); "therefore Thy servant loveth it!" Great reason indeed had David for loving it, a selfish man might say; for all the word of the Lord spoken of him in his younger days by the mouth of the prophet Samuel did surely come to pass; yet we should remember that when it came to him by the mouth of Nathan in a way by no means pleasing to the flesh, he could still with reverent submission welcome it in the spirit of a royal descendant, who said to Isaiah, "Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken," and of his Son and his Lord, who said, "Not my will but Thine be done."

With especial reference to the few immediately foregoing sentences, I may remark parenthetically that it may be a relief to some unduly burdened and anxious minds to reflect that great allowance may be made for many of the obnoxious peculiarities of the Middle Ages and some which still distinguish Romanism, when we think of the disadvantages the Christian hierarchy laboured under between the days of the Apostles or their next successors, and the times when the Scriptures began to become accessible. What shifts men must have been put to in their efforts to impress on the people the doctrines, facts, mysteries and the awful and paramount importance of the Christian system! Can we wonder if they scrupled not to do this through the eyes as well as the ears of the uneducated multi-

tude ? Whilst we lament the abuses that resulted, it is consoling to admit that much real and it may be trusted eternal good was achieved. For it cannot be denied that in the Dark Ages there *was* such a thing as faith. Christianity was not in its perfection certainly ; but it had its influence on the nations which called themselves by its name, and it exercised a perfectly transforming power on some individuals whose characters are recorded as bright examples even to this day. We see nothing in the Papacy now but its deathlike impotency for good and its miserable mischief-making through its very decay and corruption. No wonder then that we think only of the inherent vices of its constitution. Yet history tells us that there have been times when it was the promoter of civilisation, and the authoritative restrainer of tyrants. It is true that the symbolism that did its rough work in the Middle Ages is not wanted in the presence of the Scriptures. But it is almost as difficult to get men to change their ceremonies of religion as their religion itself, their mode of worship as their object of worship. We do not use Government compulsion now-a-days in religious matters, so we must still exercise some patience and forbearance, and we cannot expect any great change to be unattended with troubles. Yet it is to be hoped, that though in some few notable cases there has been an unaccountable retrogression, progress is being made. The wonderful multiplication of Bibles and astonishing increase in their circulation will, in time, have the effect, under God's good providence, of disabusing men

of the errors of superstition, and of relieving them from enthralling spiritual tyranny.

But—to return to our more immediate subject—I must observe that it is often said with great appearance of force in support of the literal accuracy and truth of every part of the Bible, “If every chapter, every verse, even every word be not absolutely true and certain, where are our doubts to stop? If we hesitate about one thing we may about another; and so go on till nothing sure is left us. Unless we take our stand on the assertion that Scripture contains nothing that is not an authoritative revelation from Divine and infallible truth, we may go on getting rid of it bit by bit till the whole becomes frittered away, till there is no authority left in the Word of God.” But we need not be careful to answer in this matter. It would be presumptuous so to do. It is not for us, happily, to regulate the methods by which eternal truth should be communicated to mankind. We may have had our ideas about them, but God’s thoughts are not our thoughts. We might have expected and preferred that Divine truth should have been stated nakedly and dogmatically—that, as it were, God should have Himself drawn up our creeds for us—that the writers of Scripture, instead of being allowed to express themselves in the way most useful to those whom they addressed, should have been forced to use terms that would square accurately with all the facts of history and the discoveries of modern science. But if it does not appear that God has so willed, we must thankfully

take his good gifts as He pleases to send them. We might wish that the earth should always bring forth our food spontaneously without requiring the sweat of our face for its cultivation, or that nothing but the precious wheat should be allowed to spring up when we know that good seed has been sown in our fields. But bodily labour is not only necessary for man's support but good for his health, and it is good for him also to *search* the Scriptures. If he does so with an honest and good heart he will find a sufficient answer to the great question, "What is truth?" enough I mean to regulate his life here and lead him to peace hereafter. He will find more than mere mortal powers could have originated. Without perplexing himself with details he may be perfectly sure of the great facts of the Gospels and the intention of the sayings of Our Lord. For instance he may be certain that, on occasion of a visit to Jericho, Our compassionate Saviour gave sight to a blind man; and though the well-attested fact had been represented to St. Mark as occurring when Christ was leaving the City, and to St. Luke as when He was entering it, there can be no doubt about the encouragement the incident affords to persevering importunate prayer and earnest faith. The truth of the event itself and the lessons to be learnt therefrom depend not on the possibility of reconciling the impressions of informants as to minor details which are perfectly unimportant except as proving independence of testimony.

I fear indeed that those excellent men who assert

the plenary and verbal inspiration* of the Holy Scriptures do cause many weak brethren to offend. How painful it must be to them when discrepancies, and things contrary to nature, and things that no arguments

* I find on looking over these papers that, in the order they happen to have taken, this is the first occasion on which the above term occurs in this book. I think therefore it may be as well to make some explanation here, though at the risk of obtruding too lengthy a note. The form in question has now acquired a conventional sense and become a sort of party watchword, and I employ it not because I like it, but because it is a recognised one. For myself, I should be very sorry to say that I doubt plenary inspiration, but I do doubt what is conventionally meant by the words. I believe in it as far as I am convinced that the sacred writers were so *fully* inspired by God, that the Scriptures which came from under their hands were, are, and will be to the end of the present dispensation, "profitable for *doctrine*, for *reproof*, for *correction*, for *instruction in righteousness*." Thoroughly accepting this formula of St. Paul's, I would with humble and implicit reliance place my dependance on them for those stated objects. By what tribunal am I judged if I decline to join those who foist in a supplement to the Apostle's list?—if I cannot find that on *matters of natural science* and *strictly human affairs*, things out of the Apostle's category, Scripture or reason calls on me to believe that the persons rendered subject to inspiration, mere mortal men, expressed themselves with precision, or did more than reflect the ideas, often imperfect and mistaken, of their own age? And when I say I believe "the Scriptures" to be subservient to the grand purposes specified by the Apostle, I mean "the Bible" generally as we have it now, though that, I admit, is going a great deal further than St. Paul did. But I insert the word "generally," because I cannot find that it has pleased God ever to give us such a degree of certainty about the whole as we might have if He had sent an Angel to come to us visibly from heaven with a perfect copy in his hands, saying "This is the Word of God—every part of all the writings thus bound up together is the Word of God—no other writings whatever contain the Word of God." Yet a large party calls on us to look on the Bible exactly as we should if we *knew* that a holy angel had made this announcement. But it is the Church—the Church which is simply a collection of individual believers, a "congregation of faithful men" liable to err, as our article admits—

and bendings can cause to appear exact, are met with! But what a comfort it is to us to know that such things are due only to the fallible men whom God was pleased

which has decided on the canonicity of the various writings which compose the Scriptures. And the Church's decision I, as an individual, submissively accept. I cannot however say that the Church could *infallibly* pronounce upon the inspiration of a book, for then the Church must itself have been specially inspired to do so; and if so, at what particular time was the Church so inspired, and when did such inspiration cease? Most persons would think that, if vouchsafed at all, such a gift would have been in the highest perfection in the period nearest the lifetime of the Apostles; but we find that in early times there were doubts about Jude, 2nd Peter, &c., and that disputes among the Fathers about the Apocalypse had not ceased in the fourth century. Up to that date, too, the "Epistle of Barnabas" and at times the "Shepherd of Hermas" were occasionally joined with the Scriptures. It may be useful to remember that even in modern times Luther rejected one of the epistles in the New Testament. But Bible Protestants will not make against the great Reformer, who based his system on the Scriptures, or against the Ancient Fathers, the terrible imputations which they are too ready to indulge in with respect to those who decline to join in their unqualified and unauthorised statements now. That there *are* interpolations here and there in our Bible, that there *is* a highly important passage appearing in the midst of one of the Epistles which is considered by almost all learned men to be spurious, who will deny? And if one part is doubtful, why may not every part be subjected to sound and reverent examination? Those amongst us, the generality of our population indeed, who have not the means of instituting such investigations, may well take the general consent of the holy and learned men who have done so; and more, the lowliest among them may prove by their effects on his own heart and life, if he goes the right way to work, that the Scriptures are profitable for the purposes pointed out by St. Paul. But we are not without special advantages, even at this distance of time, for examining the grounds on which the Church formed its decision. Such an examination will not destroy but render more reasonable the hope that is in us, and I believe will do more to establish it than mere declamatory assertions made by many with respect to the Bible, who could scarcely tell you how one of the books comprising it got there.

to charge with the writing of the Scriptures. It is impossible to impute to the Creator an ignorance of the nature of His own works. Yet is not this in effect done by those who would refer every word of Scripture to the actual dictation of God Himself?

Though there are then a few things in the Bible which must be considered human errors, I would by no means overlook the fact that some anachronisms and excrescences which seem at first to go against the genuineness of certain narratives may be considered as not belonging to the original text, but as having become worked into some of the old manuscripts from marginal explanations. It may be added too that though it has been objected that some of the directions in Exodus and Leviticus, about the Tabernacle and its construction, furniture and utensils, were needlessly minute and undignified, unworthy of Divine Majesty to give, they were not in fact considered so by the people immediately interested in them—a nation in its childhood, a collection of ignorant men just emancipated from a degrading bondage, and accustomed to witness ceremonies of precision and observances of emblematical ritualism in Egypt. A father may kindly utter simple words to his little children at home, to please and suit their capacities, without ceasing to be the man fit to preside in wisdom at the solemn councils of princes. We may well conclude that if an express revelation from Heaven were necessary to civilised nations in the nineteenth century, it would give no fresh directions like those in the books of Moses. Indeed the Gospel

gave none like them so far back as eighteen hundred years ago.

We may not now have the power of perfectly translating into the plain unvarnished language of our modern European communities the symbolic peculiarities of the speech of the ancient East. We may not know what to take literally and what figuratively. But we may nevertheless appropriate to ourselves all the instructions, warnings and consolations to be found throughout even the earliest of the Sacred Books. We may not for instance know how to understand exactly the wrestling of the anxious Patriarch at Peniel, but many a Christian has been divinely encouraged by the record of its issue. In fact the story of the life of the wandering, the working, the disquieted, the persevering, the bereaved, the finally successful Jacob, seems to many a servant of God but an anticipated and embellished record of his own trials, deliverances, renewed anxieties, and preservation at the last. It is wonderful indeed how the same pure vein of truth may be traced in the sacred writings through the rich but varied strata deposited by so many different ages. We who know that in Moses and all the prophets are contained the things concerning Christ, we who now possess this clue, may discover the golden thread unbroken from first to last in the hands of so many men opposed to us and even to each other in circumstances, peculiarities and times, though here and there it may seem to us rather entangled than unravelled by some of them in their "searchings" as to "what or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify."

How foolish to reject the momentous message of the Bible to us, a revelation of truths beyond man's discovery, because God has not revealed in it those things which it is not only labour but pleasure to us to find out for ourselves; those things which man may himself hope to discover, as the truths of natural philosophy, or on which he may form a judgment of his own, as the facts of history. And when inaccuracies, misstatements and imperfections are found in the Scriptures, it must, I repeat, comfort a perplexed but faithful heart to attribute them to feeble and short-sighted man and not to the Omniscient and Almighty God. Each scripture writer faithfully, according to his individual ability, delivered that which he had received of the Lord, but each certainly did so in his own way, after the manner of the men of his time. If an honoured friend sends us an important message by a person we know to be honest, we do not disbelieve it or refuse to act upon it because the messenger employed delivers it in some humble style of his own, perhaps with many peculiarities and inelegances and even with some inaccuracies which we are sure could not proceed from our friend. And if the sender commissioned another messenger, because the first might fail to meet us, we should by no means withhold belief if some incidental details were reported rather differently by the two envoys, or if one laid greater stress on some parts of the message than the other did. A few trifling discrepancies would be rather expected than otherwise if the men differed from each other in character, education and manner of

speech. And this was certainly the case with the Prophets and Apostles whom God was pleased to commission for our instruction in His ways, and by whose hands came to us the glad message of eternal life. They were unlike each other in many things, but all were like us and each other in one respect, as all were men compassed with infirmity.

Let us take warning by what is happening in some Roman Catholic countries, where most educated and thoughtful men are rejecting revealed religion altogether, because its priests connect inseparably with it a number of puerilities and legends which no sensible person can credit. I will not for a moment call any of the instructive narratives of the Bible by such names, but I will say that some ministers of religion are too apt to insist on connecting with it a belief in things contrary to nature and science, and contradictory in themselves, and that the liability of men being thus made infidels is one of the dangers of our times.

Some good men too, in trying to get over difficulties, use the rather loose expression, or something like it, that "Scripture was not intended to teach us science or history." If they would say that God does not teach these things by Scripture, I should entirely agree with them. But that some of the writers of the Bible did intend to teach them seems to me perfectly evident. How can we read the earlier chapters of Genesis, and from thence up to Ezra, and deny this? Will it not be correct to say that the ideas expressed by each writer on such matters come to us as records, and most valuable

ones, of the knowledge possessed by the learned in his time, and that the inspiration of God gave him the faculty of turning such knowledge, perfect or imperfect, to the highest account? I believe unreservedly that the worlds were made by the word of God. And this is the great truth presented in the first chapter of Genesis. But can it be *necessary* to salvation to believe, in apparent contradiction to records vastly more ancient than any that Moses could consult, that the influences of the sun did not reach this globe till after the dry land was separated from the waters, and after the earth had brought forth grass, and the herb yielding seed, and the tree yielding fruit? Whilst we gladly accept the instructive histories given by the sacred writers of the Kings of Judah and Israel, can it be *possible* for us to receive as certain *all* the incidental statements offered by their details, seeing they sometimes differ in the respective Books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles?

It has been said, with reference to such questions as these, that "people seem to forget now that there is such a thing as *Faith—Reason* is the only thing they think or speak of." This very remark was made to me not long ago by an excellent man, a minister of the Church. I mention it because in disquisitions like these it is desirable as much as possible to embody what actually passes between man and man—to mention objections really made by living and earnest men. And truly the remark of my clerical friend was weighty and well worth attention. There may be danger of forgetting faith, and depending too much on human

reason. Yet whilst admitting this, we must not allow any generalisations to carry us out of our road in the search for truth. For faith must have some foundation, and it is an ill-founded faith which permits the belief of things that are contrary to true evidence. And valid faith is not so much a correct knowledge of the exact way in which some events were performed long ago, as a trustful looking upwards to Deity and forwards to futurity—a belief in the God of wisdom, power, justice and love, Who is able not only to punish but to guide, to enlighten, and, through Jesus Christ, to bless—in a God whose condescending delights have been with the sons of men as the Scripture records of His loving kindness prove, and whose Majesty is shown in his works, which are to be sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. Ours ought to be that kind of faith which makes substantial, things hoped for, so as to give some present enjoyment of them ; and makes evident, things not seen, so as to give a sure and certain belief in eternal realities which are beyond our vision. But to exercise unquestioning belief in every written word which in these days is ascribed to God's inspired servants seems to me to be equivalent to having unquestioning faith in creatures, those creatures, too, being not only the holy men of old whom God commissioned to make known His spiritual nature and His dealings with our race, but also all the men through whose transcribing or translating hands our Bible has passed. I am indeed one of those who highly prize the Scriptures, for besides them we

have no other means of knowing how God's Spirit worked of old, or of learning the history of Our Lord and Saviour, and the teachings of Himself and His first ministers. Without the doctrines which they present to us how little should we know at this time of Him who came as the Light of the World! What indeed should we now be without the writings of those who by God's inspiration told us of all these things? But yet my faith is not in any peculiarities or particular gifts, even of those men; it does not depend on the minute incidents that they relate, which in many cases passed not under their own eyes. My faith is not in the gift, nor in the altar, nor in the temple, but in Him who sitteth above them—in Him who sanctifieth them all.

The specious objections now so much in vogue against the credibility of many of the wonderful works performed by Jesus Christ and his Apostles are certainly calculated to add greatly to the despondency of a man with a disquieted mind. And as I had occasion a little way back to use the expression, "things contrary to nature," it may be right for me to say that I did not mean by those words to refer to the things related in Scripture which are usually termed *Miracles*. The learned and profound arguments employed by philosophers and theologians both for and against the possibility or credibility of miracles are exceedingly abstruse and very difficult to comprehend. I shall not attempt to make a statement of them, but I need not on that account be hindered from saying a few plain words on the subject, confining myself as usual to a

detail of what has passed through my own mind and has left some satisfaction there.

In an inquiry on this subject we must entirely set aside for the moment any confirmation to be got from the inspiration of the Scriptures. It is a vicious principle, which is nevertheless adopted by too many good people, first to make miracles support Scripture, and then Scripture to support miracles, or *vice versa*. It is self-evident that every one who altogether rejects miracles disbelieves the Divine authority of the Bible. And it does seem to me that there is quite sufficient ordinary human testimony to prove the grand facts of Christianity, astounding and utterly beyond the usual course of events as they are. It would be enough, indeed, if a single miraculous fact were established, for the possibility of others would follow as a matter of course.

I think I may safely assume that there is no candid man, with any degree of education, in any civilised country, who will deny that there was such a person as St. Paul; and further, that all who have given themselves the least trouble in looking into the matter, whether they be unbelievers in Christianity or Rationalists, whether they be anxious for the support of religious truth or perfectly indifferent as to results, will admit that the greater part of the Epistles appearing under St. Paul's name in the New Testament* were actually sent by him to the Churches or indi-

* I do not mean to raise doubts about the genuineness of *any* of the Epistles in the New Testament, but for argument's sake I would only *take for granted* what would be *universally* conceded.

viduals to whom they purport to be addressed. The Pauline Epistles thus conceded to be genuine allude often and often to that which is the Great Fact of Christianity, a thing wholly beyond the ordinary course of events, the Resurrection of Christ; they are indeed based upon the writer's assured conviction of it. He scarcely condescends to prove it, but makes its certainty the proof of our own resurrection. He does once, indeed, give a list of those who had actually seen Our Lord after He had risen from the dead, but the passage is more a recapitulation of the undoubted facts he had taught than an appeal to the testimony of those favoured men; for no one in his senses could have written as St. Paul did in the celebrated fifteenth of First Corinthians, if there could be the slightest question about the facts, as he alludes to hundreds of witnesses actually alive at the time when he was writing. And besides this glorious event, St. Paul alludes incidentally, rarely, it is true, but yet as to matters admitting of no manner of doubt, to various signs and wonders wrought by Christ and the Apostles, Paul himself included. And I would ask any one to try the experiment of reading rapidly* through St. Paul's

* I mean *rapidly*, or hastily, for the purpose of getting through many chapters at one sitting, and so seizing the general drift. And for that particular object it may be well to use the same practice with other parts of Scripture. Distinct purposes may of course be attained by different methods. For instance, one desirable habit may be to confine attention for a short time each day to a small portion of Scripture, or get by heart a verse or two in regular course, so as to grasp and treasure up the particular instruction or warning or comfort it is designed to impart.

Epistles (as one might glance through a new book for the sake of seeing the scope of it), and say if a prominent man of his position, a well-educated person, a public character as he may be called, very careful too of his own reputation, could have ventured to write in the way he did to large bodies of men, some of them very captious and half-estranged from him, if the leading events connected with the establishment of Christianity had been at all doubtful or disputable. And St. Paul acted as if the facts he preached were real. It is from human not from inspired testimony we believe that he laid down his life for Christianity. And the Apostle was not a feeble man who changed his opinions every few months or years. If the date of his conversion was A.D. 35, his earliest extant Epistle was written probably about seventeen years afterwards, and his last, fourteen years after that; so that his steady Christian course lasted for no short time. And, thirty-one years probably after he began to "preach Christ that He is the Son of God," and throughout which he had endured the assaults of unbelievers and all kinds of persecution and affliction, this acute and truth-loving man, "being such an one as Paul the aged," having met with nothing to shake his faith, could say, "I am ready to be offered—I have fought a good fight—I know whom I have believed and AM PERSUADED that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day."

I suppose too it may be taken as undisputed that the first Epistle of Peter is genuine (whatever some few

persons may think about the second). In the course of that unquestioned letter the Apostle, who at all events had personally known Jesus Christ well as a man, speaks in so many words of His being "quickened by the spirit" after having been "put to death in the flesh"—of "the Resurrection of Jesus Christ" and of His having "gone up into Heaven." And the fact ought to have due weight, that most of the Epistles appeared at a time when many persons must have been in existence who were living at the period of the Crucifixion and witnessed the events that attended it. Could the Apostles have written in the way they did if these persons had the power of contradicting them?

With respect to the books which we call the Gospels, it may be shown by quotations in various works, and also in other ways, that they did appear at a very early age of the Christian Church; and I am not aware that any attempt has been made to prove that their truthfulness as to matters of fact was ever disputed at that period. St. Luke's Gospel is not considered to be the earliest, but by comparing that with the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, it is evident that both were written by the same person, and that the Gospel was the earlier production by some time; and, by the way in which the later of the two Books closes, it may be fairly concluded that Acts was published about the time that St. Paul had completed the second year of his first imprisonment at Rome. St. Luke's Gospel, then, must have appeared *within* about twenty or thirty

years after Our Lord's death. And having mentioned this Gospel, I must add that it is a very noteworthy fact that the most remarkable of all the particulars respecting the birth of Our Lord and of the miraculous circumstances preceding and following it, and that also two separate accounts of that wondrous and crowning event the ascension of Christ into Heaven, should have been detailed by the investigating, educated and pains-taking Luke, who declares that he had perfect understanding of such things, and writes in order that Theophilus might also know *the certainty* of them.

Whatever philosophical statements may be made about the impossibility of proving a miracle by any attainable testimony, it does appear to me in a review of the preceding considerations that it is easier to believe in miracles than to disbelieve the assertions made by men of the characters and means of information possessed by the Evangelists, made too at the time they were, and in the face of opponents who would have contradicted them if they could. The quiet but confident way in which signs and wonders are alluded to in the writings of the Apostles has already been noticed. They built on grounds which might be obviously solid to the Church in future ages as well as to the earliest believers: yet St. James incidentally refers to miracles of healing as to things (if not a contradiction in terms to say so) of ordinary occurrence.

The very observable backwardness in these days of

ours to believe in miracles is due in measure, no doubt, to the extremely scrutinising habits of this age. Nothing is accepted without question; and even our old and most cherished beliefs have to undergo their re-examination. All this causes a serious shock to some persons, but there is no reason that it should be hurtful provided our investigations are conducted with candour and a proper degree of reverence for sacred things. But it is difficult to see why the numerous and well-attested miracles of the New Testament, for well attested they are, should cause the trouble they do to some minds. Had we lived a few years earlier we might perhaps assentingly have heard them appealed to as convincing proofs of Christianity. But now they are classed among its difficulties. People who were lately, like some Jews in Paul's time, requiring a sign, are now in turn, like the Greeks, seeking after wisdom. But as far as I can form a judgment, man's common sense might lead him to see that in certain conditions of the world, or in certain stages of human progress, it might be suitable, and was therefore not improbable, that God should confirm the truth of any fresh spiritual revelation that it might please Him to give, by means of miracles. Our Saviour, for instance, found Himself forced to say to the Jews, "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe." If we objected to the credibility of a thing merely because we did not find it quite suited to our own condition, we might as well exclaim against the parables in the Gospels as against the miracles,

yet such were the two kinds of means which Our Lord's divine wisdom saw fit to employ in bringing the new dispensation before the notice of the Jews. Should not *we* be almost as much astonished to hear a sermon beginning "A certain nobleman went," &c., and ending "But those mine enemies bring hither, and slay them before me," as to see a man standing forth in the congregation to have his withered arm healed? But from the times of Gideon, who proved God both by the wet and by the dry fleece, and of his son Jotham, who told the men of Shechem about the trees and their king, the House of Israel sought after signs from God, and expected parables from their teachers. To us the Jews themselves are a sign, and the things that happened to them are ensamples for our admonition.

One of the principal modern objections to the credibility of any miracle recorded in the Bible, as far as I can comprehend them, is based on the assertion that Nature always is, and therefore always was, and will be, must be, uniform, unchangeable, the same; that is, the laws which regulate it are altogether inviolable or immutable; that what, in short, is called "Law," or "Order," must not be, cannot be, and therefore never has been, interfered with. Amongst objectors, some would admit that God was the Author of "Law," but that, when once constituted, "Law" was left for ever to take its own course. Some go so far as to say that "Law" was always independent of God, eternal and unchangeable as He. A third class, utterly unbelieving, are found to go further still, for there are

those who scruple not to say that "Law" or "Order" or "Nature" is God. We have nothing to do now with the two last sets of objectors, for we are thinking only of the case of the tempted Christian man who could not possibly sympathise with them. We will only look at the plausible idea that God would not interfere with the laws that He has ordained. I don't know what right we have to say this with applicability to miracles; for those laws were given by God for the benefit of His creatures, and why should He not be able to suspend them on certain occasions when the highest interests of His noblest creature would be advanced by His so doing? And so exceptional have been these suspensions (if we so call them), that man may still count with certainty on the undisturbed regularity of nature till the end of time for all the purposes of his daily life and wants. I should myself be well content thus to refer all to the direct power and interference of God. But if this does not satisfy every mind, another question may be, and has been, well asked: "How can we disprove the existence of 'Laws' of nature higher than those we are ordinarily acquainted with? and if such exist, would not their operation be visible at times only when a crisis supervenes which calls them into exercise?" It may be said in illustration of this that the *general object* of the whole of the complicated machinery of a locomotive engine on one of our iron ways is unquestionably that by means of its action a train of carriages with their contents may be made to *advance*. It might be possible that some un-

educated husbandman whose labours confined him daily within the bounds of a plot of land close to the rail but distant from any station, who knew nothing but what he saw, might not unnaturally think that the *only* kind of work an engine ever performed or could perform was to drag a train straight onwards in a *forward* direction. We might suppose him possibly to say that no one could see the machine at work more times a day than he, and that that was the only thing it ever did. But if this man's field of view ceased to be restricted to one small space, or if he were to become a passenger for a long journey, he might discover what he could not guess before, that sometimes in order to be able to advance with safety, and particularly when it was necessary, for reaching a certain destination, to move the train *from one line to another*, the engineer would put in requisition a contrivance made for enabling him to force the machine and the train with it, *backward* for a space. The poor labourer would find that the proper route could only be run by the occasional suspension or rather by the reversal of the course the engine was made for taking, and that appropriate contrivances which he had not dreamt of were provided for that very reversal by the constructor. And the great wheel of nature rolls onward and onward before our view; and we are apt to say that the laws which seem to us to regulate its movements are unchangeable, that they have been always exercised in the way they now are and always will be. But how can we be sure that there are no laws which certain conditions may call

into operation controlling such as were found by Newton to regulate the fall of a fruit to the ground, and to keep the planets in their orbits? Is not a man's body *matter* as much as a piece of wood, or a clod, or a stone is? Yet, as it has been well asked, cannot a man raise his arm, or seize an object and lift it, in defiance of the "laws" of gravitation? It is no answer to say that he does it in conformity with those laws by the mechanical action of muscle, sinew and bone; because these again have to be put in action themselves, and you cannot make a dead man's or a sleeping man's or an unwilling man's arm perform the work; there is no mechanical power by which the cords of his sinews may be tightened. But mere volition is sufficient to do it; and thus, whenever the *mind* so determines, the living man does control the laws of motion and the *vis inertiae*. It may be replied indeed that even this is only in accordance with the ordinary course of nature, and that the vital powers interfere with material objects, only through the brain or nerves, themselves equally material objects. But even so, it would remain to be proved what the vital force is, and from whence these powers of the will, exercised though they may be through the brain, are derived. We see plainly enough that spirit does act on matter; have we a right to say that the means of action have the limits just mentioned? If the soul of the animated creature puts in force a "law" interfering with the law of matter, should we wonder if He who hath life in Himself—if the Eternal Spirit—sometimes applies to the furtherance of man's

most important interests still higher "laws," which though beyond aught that we can discover, may for all that be amongst the fundamental "laws" of the Universe, called systematically into exercise in certain conjunctures according to the ordained and orderly arrangements of the Divine Will?

It is remarkable enough that there are many at the present day who refuse to admit that Christ had the power of working *miracles*, and yet freely acknowledge his conspicuous *wisdom*. But to my mind the one is equally astonishing with the other. The parties I refer to derive all they know and teach about the "life of Jesus" from the four Gospels; they scruple not to appeal to the statements of the Evangelists whenever it suits their purpose to do so, yet at other times they twist, misrepresent, treat as incredible, and ignore those statements in the most unfair and unjustifiable way. But the question these men would find it exceedingly difficult to answer is that which so much perplexed the countrymen of Jesus Christ, "Whence hath this man this *wisdom*?" Objectors to Our Lord's Divinity should be prepared to prove whence He derived that wisdom which they admit was most admirable. They do not now deny that from His wisdom arose that which availed to overthrow Judaism, and extinguish the superstitions of the old Gentile nations, to give to the world a new faith, an indestructible motive-spring of morality, a pure doctrine, which is gradually becoming the sole religious system of civilised communities. And a work

such as this, which in its development is to be co-extensive with the whole human race, was designed, originated, and put on its fair course by One whom they describe as a simple man in humble circumstances, a native of Galilee, knowing nothing whatever of the world, extremely ignorant of all matters connected with the habits of the great and of the way in which nations are governed, one who had never read anything but Moses and the Prophets, a person totally unacquainted with science, philosophy and literature. These men are now in the habit of admitting that the *sayings* recorded in the first three Gospels were really uttered by Jesus Christ, with the exception of the prophetic parts. It even suits them to allow that there was groundwork for great part of the discourses reported in the fourth Gospel. But they endeavour to make Christ's wisdom rather less surprising by saying that His ideas were not altogether original, not quite exclusively his own, that thoughts and sentiments something like them had been brooding in a few other minds besides—that Philo had actually taught things sometimes which came very near to Christian doctrine. At the same time these objectors are candid enough to allow that all that ever came from Philo would have failed to make the least impression on the religion of the world at large. They say, also, that Jesus could never have heard of the writings or opinions of Philo, and must have been ignorant even of his existence. As so much has been made lately of some of the admirable sentiments of that learned Alexandrian Jew by one of the

most prominent of continental unbelievers, it may be as well to consider for a moment or two whether Philo or Jesus, if we look at them both as mere men, as the writer alluded to does, would have been likely to have exercised the wider influence in the world. Without giving any biographical account of Philo, I may simply say that Josephus calls him "a man eminent in all accounts," that he was born B.C. 20 and lived till A.D. 50, that his residence was in Alexandria, that he was brother of the "Alabarch" or Governor of the Jews in Egypt, that he was a man of great influence, a deep student of the ancient Scriptures and well versed in the Platonic philosophy, that he represented the body of Egyptian Jews as one of their deputies in an embassy to Caligula and again to Claudius; that his writings were held in great repute and were so well preserved that some of his important works have come down to us. To compare with this highly educated, influential man of the world, who enjoyed so long a career in a city famous for intellectual activity and culture, the very central spot for the critical and philosophical study of the Jews' religion, we have a Man whose outward circumstances have already been alluded to, and of Whom it may be said in addition that He was crucified at the early age of about thirty-three, that as far as we know He never wrote a page in His life, that His residence was usually at a country town in a district of Palestine, that His associates were provincials of station in life no higher than His own, from whom He could have learnt nothing whatever; and that His instructors, according to modern

sceptical writings, were only the ancient Jewish Scriptures, His communings with nature and with His own pure heart, and perhaps just a few sentences from the teachings of such Rabbis as Hillel, which may have reached an inquiring and truth-seeking man even in His lowly sphere. And yet the Alexandrian philosopher, moralist and commentator, notwithstanding all his advantages, would have left the world pretty much as it was at his birth-time had it not been for the three years of the public life of the untutored Jesus of Nazareth. Unbelievers, constrained to show some apparent cause for results they cannot contradict, admit now that Our Lord was an adorable person, of mien and gesture the most winning; they profess to be enraptured with His "great mind," but they fail to demonstrate how any mere human being with a mind however great could have had power for effecting under the most favourable circumstances all that has followed from the sayings and work of Jesus Christ. Yet we have seen that His position and circumstances humanly speaking were the reverse of favourable.

Was not that a wisdom superhuman which was never taken unawares, and was constantly ready not only to baffle the insidious questionings of the learned classes, but also to put to them those deep problems which they were quite unable to solve? And we should not forget that the wisdom of Our Lord's behaviour was as perfect as that of His words. And yet a Person so meek and lowly, acting sometimes as a servant in the midst of His humble disciples, refusing to be made a king, and

practising always the forbearance inculcated on His followers, professed, on the proper occasions, to have come as the great Saviour of the World, and predicted the drawing of all men to Himself. And we see that His claims were not visionary. They are being established. The world is in process of being saved ; our adversaries admit that all men are being drawn to Him. On the other hand, though I read of Philo that his works were sometimes wild and fanciful, I can well believe that, in the providential government of God, he and others might have been raised up for the purpose of indirectly preparing the way for the Gospel among Hellenistic Jews and other educated communities, as we know that John the Baptist was expressly sent to prepare the way of Christ in Judea. I would not deny, either, that glimmerings of the true light may have been vouchsafed centuries before to some of the Grecian sages and philosophers, who "showed the work of the law written in their hearts." Yet how few of the Christianised population of the world know a single word of all the sayings of Socrates or of the writings of Xenophon and Plato ! How very few, comparatively, amongst the millions of Christians now living have ever heard that there ever was such a man as Philo !* The great heathen and Jewish philosophers, moralists and searchers after truth, before Our Lord's time, and those contemporary with Him, doubtless

* Wishing myself for information about him, I once referred to a large biographical dictionary and could not find even the name. There are other dictionaries, of course, that include it.

performed no unimportant parts. But not one of them singly nor all of them together could have availed for correcting the vices and destroying the superstitions of the world. That stupendous work which commenced eighteen centuries ago, which has been proceeding ever since, and which shall at length be triumphantly accomplished, is not the operation of any great human mind. It is due to the excellency of the power of Christ's Divine wisdom. It is, I believe, the work not of a man but of God.

We may now, perhaps, examine some considerations of a different sort, which are very apt to bring disquiethood in their train when a man attempts to judge of the fitness of things, and tries to look at all nature and the Gospel in the same moment of time. He is, then, perhaps, astounded with the contrast between the immensity of the Universe, which the discoveries of each day make more bewildering, and the minuteness of this earth, an almost unnoticeable speck beneath the myriads of celestial worlds. When he "considers the Heavens," expanded to an extent infinitely beyond the conceptions of the wondering Psalmist, he is tempted to say, "Is it possible that the Creator of all those glorious worlds that I see with my unassisted eyes, of those, greatly more numerous, which I discover through the aids furnished by modern science, and of those, more numerous still, in cloud-like clusters, which I know exist but cannot distinguish, as yet, one from another in their inconceivable distance—is it possible

that the Maker and Sustainer of this, which approaches infinity, can have done what the Scriptures tell us He has done for man, the poor inhabitant of what may be called, comparatively, a mere grain of dust? Can the Almighty Lord of the illimitable Heavens have sent His own Son to work in this obscure sphere—to taste of death in the nature of the weak creatures but lately made, who move about feebly on its surface? Truly these questions are almost overpowering at times. But we must not be presumptuous even in our self-abasement. It is not for us to decide what is most consistent with the glory of God, which, according to that common and true saying, is as wonderfully displayed in the minutest as in the greatest of His works. And, besides this, we cannot at all say with what object He created what are called the heavenly bodies. We know nothing of the purposes they were designed principally to serve. And however we may talk of man's insignificance and weakness, we cannot conceive of a being of any form or nature more capable of physical, mental and spiritual activity and enjoyment than an ideally perfect man.

And where is the world that we know anything whatever about that such a being as man could even inhabit? It could hardly be the Sun, that immense and burning mass. Certainly not our own satellite the Moon, for no creature could draw a breath where there is either no atmosphere or one too thin to prevent the surface from being alternately scorched during the tedious day and frozen through the long night, if

indeed there be any liquid there to freeze. It is true that our sister planets, as far as the reach of scientific investigation can inform us, do possess atmospheres in some degree similar to our own, and other conditions adapting them for many imaginable kinds of animal and vegetable life. But nevertheless, degrees of light and heat which in some we should call very excessive and in others very inadequate, and various things besides, render them quite unsuitable for the present constitution and organisation of man. Any inhabitants of the planets that revolve round our sun must therefore certainly differ in their nature from the present human race. I am not so presumptuous as to say that they cannot be possessed of intellectual faculties and actuated by moral principles. I would not affirm the impossibility of their being of an order far superior to human kind. But I must say that it would seem more probable that their condition should be greatly inferior to ours. Philosophers there are who endeavour to prove that modifications of density of atmosphere may be sufficient to render it possible for a creature of human nature to exist in the other planets of our system. But what would be the blessings of existence in the case, for instance, of generations of human beings propagated for ages in cold vastly more rigorous than that which has stunted the bodies and minds of the miserable Esquimaux; or insalubrity worse than any that has enervated the poor Cretins; or in heat, either blazing or seething, more unmitigated than any that has blackened the skins of the debased tribes of Africa?

What sort of creature could a being of the nature of man be, living in Uranus or Neptune, where the image and light and heat of the sun are respectively three hundred and twenty-four and seven hundred and eighty-four times less than they are to us? To take the question of light alone, could he possibly obtain enough for the necessary purposes of existence, to say nothing of enjoyment? or if he could be made to do so by adaptability of organisation to condition, what sort of hideous creature would he be, with pupils of the eye so enlarged as to enable him to make as much of that modicum of light as we do of the glorious beam that reaches us? What would become of the human face divine? On the other hand, the vapours that encompass the planets nearer to the sun than ours, must make their day one of dull uniformity unbroken by alternations of brightness and shade, but they can hardly mitigate the glare and heat that must be received by them from the sun. And if man or a kindred being can exist scarcely, or not at all, in the spheres we have been thinking of, why should we be certain that there *must* be such a creature in the small planet Mars, merely because the adverse conditions are not so extreme there? If the argument is that the comparatively tiny Mars would not have been created but to become the abode of happy intelligent creatures, then we may in reply put the question, why was the enormous planet Neptune created? But the simple truth is that we know what the general objects of the Almighty were in the creation of this world; that is,

we know that it was intended for the abode of MAN, and that man was to have dominion over all things in it. But it seems presumptuous to limit the purposes of creation—to say that God could have had no other objects in making other worlds, dissimilar to those He had in view in forming and arranging this. It need not be surprising that we are unable to conceive what those objects were, when we have not the least idea why certain creatures were made even on this earth.

But supposing, for the sake of argument, that there *are* beings besides man who are corporeally organised and morally accountable, as it is the fashion to believe that there are, though nothing can possibly be *proved* on the point, we know not even then if any besides ourselves have ever rebelled against the laws of the Creator. And if it is the case that the inhabitants of the earth only have needed redemption, if they alone of all creatures corporeal and intelligent have fallen, then the earth, small as it is, must be the most proper scene for the work of the Redeemer. But under any hypothesis no valid reason can be given why this earth should not be the fittest spot in all creation for His work; and St. Paul does seem to hint that the remedial or beneficial effects of Christ's obedience and sacrifice are co-extensive with the whole Universe. And small as this world may be, we do not know if there is any other spot so rich, so well adapted for the highest organisations; if there be elsewhere so inexhaustible a museum of wonders, so compact and available an accumulation of wealth and beauty of

every sort in readiness for the patient industry and skilful research of its dominant inhabitant. And as to that inhabitant, though often sadly degraded, yet what a noble being man sometimes is! And when we call to mind the faculties that individuals of our race have shown, it is not for us to say that it was unworthy of Almighty love to come down here to make man a partaker of the Divine Nature. Think of the intellectual powers, the strength of purpose, and the achievements of an Archimedes, a Judas Maccabæus, a Julius Cæsar, a Newton, a Howard, a Napoleon; of one man who can carry on twelve games of chess at once* without seeing a board, and play them well; of another who can speak to the Senate in a strain of sensible and uninterrupted eloquence for three hours or more together! And think of One not to be irreverently mentioned in the same sentence with them—for His wisdom and deeds far exceeded theirs—of One who spake as never man spake, and yet His words of wisdom came through *human* organs of speech, and His *human* body was a capable medium for the performance of all His mighty works. And His glorified body was itself endued with perfection and powers not possessed by mortals, but St. John says that *we* too shall be like Him when we see Him as He is. We may imagine, then, that man may be the very fittest of creatures to be crowned with high glory and honour, and to have all things put under his feet. It is true there may be worlds belonging to some other solar

* Done by Blackburn (English) and Paulsen (German).

systems where the perfections of the Divine workmanship are as richly shown as here, globes rolling round some distant suns where creatures equal or superior to man can exercise their powers and faculties, but if so, they are as unknown to us as unseen by us. The bare possibility of there being such places either now or hereafter, because such may be God's good pleasure, is all that can be admitted. And if other suns have their revolving globes, how do we know that such planets are yet fully developed? For how very short a space, comparatively, has intelligent, God-worshipping man been on this earth! for what thousands of ages was it rolling round the sun an object of beauty to imaginary observers in Mercury, Venus, or Mars (could we fancy them to have existed), before it was ready for the being to whom was given dominion over it—for man, than whom the Scriptures recognise no superior lower than the angels? How do we know that this is not the *first completed* of all the works of God?—that man is not the first fruits of his creatures—of such I mean as possess both bodies and souls?—and that man's present abode may not be the most ancient habitable spot of creation, fitly chosen as the place for those divine achievements and manifestations which shall influence or decide the course of all future corporeal beings into whom God shall breathe the living soul? Then again as to the noble progeny brought forth by God's command on this teeming earth—this little concentration of energetic forces, material, animal, and mental—what an aggregate im-

portance has been given to our race by the condition, that each individual, in being made subject to the law of temporal death, affords room in due time for a successor! Whilst the earth abideth as we see it now, *one generation*, in the words of the Preacher, *passeth away and another generation cometh*. Death is perpetually at his work sweeping off the maimed, the diseased, the weak and the old; and life is continually given to numbers at least as great, all of whom will act their parts whilst the complex system of each shall be individually strong enough to retain the vital principle. We have not, then, in considering these subjects, to think of the interests of one family, or of one nation, or of the multitudes composing all the world that was taxed in the reign of Cæsar Augustus, or even of the many millions living at this moment in Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and America. What we have to try to form a conception of, if we choose to go into matters such as these, should be the enormous sum of all the generations that have existed since the world began, added to the numbers that shall exist up to the inauguration of the new heavens and the new earth. And when we think of the ratio at which population has lately been increasing in many parts, we may well imagine respecting the persons affected in some way or other by the work of Christ (and that is as much as to say all who have ever lived and died from the time of Adam and shall do so up to the day when the dead, small and great, must stand before God for judgment, each man according to his works), that their numbers would

be sufficiently vast to be distinguishable even in the almost infinite figures of creation—numbers so immense that it could be hardly inconsistent even with philosophical ideas of Divine greatness to believe that the Lord of countless worlds might manifest pity for them and personally interpose for their salvation.

Another thing, but too likely to fill the mind of a thoughtful man with disquietude, is the promulgation of such statements as the following, in all their bareness and awful positiveness. "*If the Scriptures have not asserted the ENDLESS punishment of the wicked, neither have they asserted the ENDLESS happiness of the righteous, nor the ENDLESS glory and existence of the Godhead.* The one is equally certain with the other. Both are laid in the same balance. They must be tried by the same tests. And if we give up the one, we must, in order to be consistent, give up the other also. The necessary conclusion, then, must be, that the smoke of future torment will ascend up *for ever and ever.*"* Unhappily for us, statements which

* The above statement is quoted by Dr. Blomfield in his notes on Mark ix. 44, as an extract from Professor Stewart's "Exegetical Essays." I decide on founding my remarks on something published many years ago, rather than on any *declaration* put forth lately, or on any recent dictum paternally pronounced *ex cathedra*; for it is not easy to examine dispassionately and impartially the decisions of men of the present day, whose character, learning and station, we greatly love, admire and honour. Yet if it had not been for recent occurrences, I could not have brought my mind to insert anything on this painful point, so strangely made a touchstone of orthodoxy. However guarded I may be, I fear I may distress the susceptibility of some whose opinions I should value. But not even on that account can I refrain from

go to the full extent of this astounding assertion have been recently put forth ; and I seriously consider them quite as likely to disturb a weak faith as any of the difficulties brought into prominence by modern science and research. I am not going to assert that the punishments of those who shall be sentenced to depart from Christ will, at some period or other, be brought to an end. May God in his infinite mercy avert from me and all who may ever see this, the tremendous doom which must await those who shall "come forth to the resurrection of condemnation;"—the awful fate of those who, having "trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified an unholy thing, and having done despite unto the Spirit of grace," shall find it "a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!" There is enough in Scripture respecting the misery of the lost to strike any one with awe. But to declare, as some human beings venture to do, that "we must give up the endless glory and existence of the Godhead if we give up the endless punishment of the wicked;"—to affirm that, "both must be laid in the same balance," that "both must be tried by the same tests,"—such assertions seem to me really shocking, because presumptuous, irreverent and unscriptural.

The case may in few words be stated thus. From

putting in my honest though reluctant protest, against what I think may be very mischievous to the weak. I wish to add that in the above quotation the italics and capitals are given exactly as I find them in Dr. Blomfield's Testament.

the days of the learned and self-denying Origen, to the present time, there have been truthful, laborious, painstaking, Scripture-searching men, whose investigations lead them to declare that they can find no sufficient ground to believe that any human beings will be subjected to a necessarily endless state of torment. Then, according to the unhappy assertion I am combating, if any of us can believe that by possibility these good men may be right, we must also believe it possible that the happiness of the righteous may at some time or other terminate, and (if such a dreadful supposition can be alluded to without irreverence) that even the existence of the Godhead may not be endless!

My object here is not to assert the correctness of the opinions of Origen and his successors in this matter. There are some texts which seem to leave in us an unavoidable impression that the state of the lost will be a hopeless one. But on the other hand there are texts which seem to lead to an opposite conclusion. There are many honest men now who, influenced by such texts and other weighty considerations, think it not impossible that those persons may be right who receive certain statements of Scripture in their literal signification—who believe in no qualified sense that as Christ *is* lifted up He will draw *all* men to Himself; that God so loved the world that He sent His Son into it not to condemn the world, but that *the world* through Him might be saved; that Christ hath tasted death for *every* man; that He was a Ransom for *all*, to be testified in due time; that He shall be *satisfied* with the travail of

His soul; that to Him *every* knee shall bow and *every* tongue confess; that there shall be times of restitution of *all* things; that God shall make *all* things new; that death shall be *destroyed*; that God shall be *all in all*. There are many who think that their brethren have a perfect right to believe that the vaunted benefits and restraining effect of the terrors of everlasting torment are more than counterbalanced by the difficulties connected with a faith which requires our belief that God could doom a vast portion of mankind, created by Himself, to irretrievable misery of the most appalling kind—who think that the setting forth of the hope of the Gospel, and the love of the Father, will always prove greater dissuasives from sin than the threatenings of endless damnation and the dread of an avenging God. It is perfectly justifiable and proper in all who consider such conclusions wrong to endeavour to prove them so; but it is hard to charge those who hold them, with aiding to subvert our faith in the endless happiness of the righteous and the everlasting existence of the Eternal God, things which the latter especially and most strenuously maintain. If I thought it possible that their interpretations of the texts referred to might be correct, I assert that I should *not* thereby be bound to yield up the least particle of my belief respecting the duration of the happiness in store for the blessed, and the essential infinity of the adorable Godhead. For I maintain that these capital articles of our faith and the doctrine of endless punishment do *not* rest on the same grounds.

I suppose that what has given rise to the assertion that they do can only be the fact that the adjective *αἰώνιος*, or a derivation of *αἰών* in some form or other, is joined sometimes in the New Testament with the Greek words which respectively signify "God," the "life" of the blessed, and also the "punishment" of the wicked. That such word or words are found so connected no one can wish to deny; but in order to deduce from that fact the required proof, it must be shown first, that we have no other grounds for believing in the endless happiness of the righteous and existence of the Godhead but those to be derived from the employment in the Bible of that word *αἰών* and its cognates, and secondly, that those words can have no other possible meaning than that of never-ending. For (to take the last first) if in any single instance they can mean something less than that, we are not always bound to attach to them the extent of infinity when they are applied to things or men, though we should do so when they are applied to God. For example, the adjectives *good* and *great* are used in Scripture as epithets of men and things and also of God; but we are not so foolish as to say therefore that if certain men and things were not infinitely good and great we have no ground for certainty that the Almighty is infinitely good and great. Now I am not going into an examination here of all the various meanings of the Greek words I have alluded to; because the object of this paper is not to demonstrate the truth of the doctrines of Universalism; but it may be right to advert to the

fact that the words in question do not invariably, even in the New Testament, convey the sense of endless duration ; and that in the Septuagint, with which the writers of the New Testament were usually very familiar and from which they took many forms of expression, those words were often joined to things of certainly limited duration. The precise term *ἀλυσίος* is used for instance in connection with *the inheritance of the Levites in certain fields*, with *ordinances, statutes, priesthood, covenant, &c.*, all of them things belonging to the Mosaic dispensation, things which though certainly of long, were by no means of endless, duration, things which have all as the Apostle tells us passed away and have given place to something better. But I assert that we are not in any degree dependent on that one doubtful word for our belief respecting the life of the righteous, and the existence of God. If it were banished from the New Testament we might indeed have less reason than now to feel sure of the endless punishment of the wicked, but our faith respecting heaven and God would remain quite undiminished. For, thanks be to God, the whole tenor of that blessed Book is to the effect that *life* and *immortality* are brought to light by the Gospel, which is all on the side of *life*. Our Saviour tells us that "God is the God of the *living*," that "all" (that is, in the unseen world, I presume) "*live* unto Him," that they who receive Christ shall *live* by Him, that because "*He lived*" (an assertion, I take it, of absolute endless life) "they should *live* also," that "the Father *hath life* in

Himself and hath given the Son to have *life in Himself*," that his followers should be "*in Him* even as He was in the Father." We are also told that his disciples should be "*like Him*," that those who "overcome should be as pillars in the temple of his God, and should go *no more* out," that they should "have a crown of *life*," and "eat of the tree of life." The force of these texts depends on no form of the word *αἰώνιος*. And if I have not said enough with respect to the existence of the ever-living God, I might add that He, with Whom, as we are told even in the Old Testament, is the *fountain of life*, is by St. Paul called the Possessor of "*Immortality*." In another place He is called "*eternal and immortal*"; and would it not be fair to argue from this, with those who make so much of a word, that there may be some distinction between these two epithets? We need not say that *αἰώνιος, των αἰώνων**, &c., mean nothing; for I think we may most surely and safely connect their signification sometimes with *long duration*, sometimes with the state of existence *hereafter*, the *unseen*, the *spiritual world*; and I am far from asserting that they never mean *endless*; but it is very curious that in the single occur-

* In looking over the LXX. for the usage of these words I have discovered three instances which, to say the least, are rather curious, viz., Ex. xv. 18, *Κυριος βασιλεύων τον αἰωνα και εν' αἰωνα και ἔτι*; Dan. xii. 3, *eis tous aionas και ἔτι*; and Mic. iv. 5, *eis τον αἰωνα και ἐπέκεινα*. In these places the Greek translators seem to have thought that *αἰων* so developed was not enough, and accordingly added *και ἔτι* and *καὶ ἐπέκεινα*. If "*for ever*" had already been sufficiently expressed, they need hardly have added "*and still longer, and beyond*."

rence of the expression "*endless life*" in our New Testament, the Greek for *endless* is not *aiōnios*, but *ἀκατάλυτος* (indissoluble, from *ἀκατάλυω*). Disconnected with the usual Greek words for *eternal* and *for ever*, I am not aware of any expressions in the New Testament so positive and strong respecting the endless duration of future punishment that we must necessarily doubt respecting God, and the happiness of the righteous, if we doubt that. The references made to this awful subject in the Gospels and in Revelation are generally either allusions to customs in vogue in Syria and other Eastern countries, or quotations from the Prophet Isaiah. As an example of the former, note the painful mortification of those who had expected admission to a glorious banquet in an illuminated palace, but were thrust away instead to grind their teeth with disappointment in the midnight darkness outside: and as example of the latter, the being cast out into Gehenna, which was a part near Jerusalem where fires were kept up for consuming the offal thrown there, and where a constant succession of worms preyed on the putrid flesh. People scarcely reflect that Our Lord, in speaking of "the worm that dieth not and of the fire that is not quenched," repeated literally the words of Isaiah, who certainly referred to *punishments inflicted in this life* (see Bloomfield). And Isaiah's strong expressions repeated in the Apocalypse, respecting the pitch and brimstone which were not to be quenched, and the smoke which should go up for ever and ever, applied to the scorching overthrow of the people of Bozrah and the withering con-

sumption of the land of Idumea. And with respect to the celebrated text so much relied on in Matth. xxv. 46, it is very remarkable that the most eminent of living commentators believed long, and may yet believe for aught that I know, that Christians are not referred to at all throughout the passage! (See Alford's Greek Testament *in loc.*) Another strong text, if taken literally (2 Thess. i. 9), would seem to point more to complete annihilation than to continuous torment.

Though the last few paragraphs are not intended to confirm the supposition that the misery of the wicked will ever be brought to an end either by their annihilation, or by their being received at length into God's favour for the sake of His Son, they are intended to show that if any honest and truth-seeking man should after proper examination think it possible that one or the other of these suppositions may be correct, he need not torture himself by thinking that he is thereby disputing the everlasting continuance of the happiness of the righteous and the endless glory and existence of the blessed Godhead. It is an awful and dangerous thing to admit that if the conventional signification of one doubtful word and its derivatives can be overthrown, the hope of the Christian must perish with it. But we who have a sure and certain hope depend not on a word or two for our belief in the endless felicity of the redeemed, for we know that they "shall be *ever* with the Lord."

I must ask for pardon if too much has been said on this point, but it may be as well now to leave it and

to take some notice of yet another kind of trial which I am disposed to think proves a source of frequent unhappiness to the despondent man. He makes himself and others miserable at times by his complaints of "want of love to God." He tries to love God, but it seems that he cannot; or at all events he is entirely dissatisfied with his feelings in this respect. But even for this disordered state, the universal remedy comes again. Nothing can cause us to overcome but the belief that Jesus is the Son of God. Let us see *how God has revealed Himself to us in Christ*, and then ask ourselves if we can love Him. The miserable man has just perhaps been hearing in the Church Services certain chapters which I could name, taken from Numbers, Joshua, Judges, i. and ii. Samuel, ii. Kings, and Ezekiel; he may have been just reading certain other passages I could point to in the Pentateuch, Samuel, Kings, and the Prophets, which, to speak the truth boldly, may have raised the very opposite emotion in his heart to the love which casteth out fear. Now I am not the person to advocate neglect of the Old Testament. My opinion is that by very many it is not studied half enough; for instead of acquainting themselves with it by means of a regular perusal throughout—a seizing of its scope and spirit—a large number of good people know very little about it save the regular Sunday lessons and a few favourite chapters. It may be profitable for us to study how the more terrible exhibitions of the Divine attributes to the ignorant, half-idolatrous,

obstinate, half-civilised Asiatics may have been perfectly suitable at certain periods just as we find them recorded, and may have subserved well the development of God's great designs. And they are to be studied as lessons by us, hard lessons though they be, for the law was a severe schoolmaster. But if a man wishes to love God now, let him look for His character in His Son. Let him think of the nobleness, power, truth, affection and tenderness of Jesus Christ. If he loves Christ he loves God. It is certain however that in many even of the ancient saints the love of God did abound. And this is a signal proof I think of the power of the Holy Spirit working in all ages, even when kings and prophets and righteous men saw not the things which we see. In these times it is very different. But in those old days, when there seems to have been no certain revelation of a future state of happiness, it could only have been the Divine principle implanted in the soul which enabled the servants of God to continue faithful to their love of Him through all the trials and contradictions of this life.

What, then, is the conclusion of the whole of this matter? The desponding man has opened his griefs, and we now see what they are. But he must be counselled to look at his difficulties with discriminating as well as unflinching gaze, for they are not all of the same nature. Some of his troubles he may get over, or perhaps, indeed, find to be but shadows that

vanish suddenly away. At even time it may be light. Some, he cannot possibly, in the very nature of things, get rid of till he finally puts off this tabernacle; but while bearing them he may be a useful example to other men; he may even be brought to welcome any means that God employs to purify him, that he may be preserved to eternal life; or, if he cannot reach to such attainments of acquiescence, he may receive strength from the thought that, though otherwise unaccountable, his troubles may be sent to be borne by him "for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby." Or, suppose a man's distress arises from his inability to interest others concerning some reforms or improvements which he may have at heart, let him consider that it may be as well perhaps that he should be checked—it may be better for the world that his notions should not be carried out: or, if there is real good in them, the time may come when he shall see them triumphant after all. Or again, there may possibly be some things which he cannot think of without taking shame to himself as long as he lives. If they refer only to man or human affairs, let him see well that he commit not himself foolishly for the future—let him try to forget the things that are behind. If they refer to God, as being sins against Him, let the man repent and turn to the way of duty, and persevere in exercising the obedience of faith; and then he may perhaps, if he listens for it, hear a still, small, but Almighty voice saying to him, "Son, be of

good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." Or, if harassed by depressing doubts and disquieting difficulties like those we have been at some length considering, let him not run away scared, and give up all for lost, at their first appearance. But without letting go that fear of God and veneration for sacred things so much imperilled by the presumptuous tone of some of the discussers of the present day, let him examine everything in an honest and teachable spirit. It may be some comfort to him to remember the question that even such a great one as John the Baptist had to send from his prison ; and he may find some satisfaction in applying to himself the answer of Our Lord to that disquieted but faithful man ; for he may see how, up to this day, the polluted are made clean, the blind are enlightened, the dead to all good are brought to life by the vivifying Gospel of Christ.

I have only one more remark to make. It will be seen that I have been speaking all along, not of the man that wishes to find flaws, but of such an one as would give anything to see Christianity triumphant—of the man that can with earnest sincerity use the words of the hymn,

"O Thou to whose all-searching sight
The darkness shineth as the light,
Search, prove my heart, it pants for Thee—
O burst these bonds and set it free !"

Let such a man remember the words of Jesus Christ and of his servant James ; let him ask for that good, comforting, and liberally bestowed gift which Our

Heavenly Father is ready to send down without upbraiding, and he may learn how to sift his doubts till they all prove light as the air which shall drive the chaff from the wheat. Thus may he find that "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

V.

THOUGHTS ON THE ADVANTAGE OF
WORKING WHILE IT IS DAY.

I WAS summoned very hastily one morning to witness the closing scene in the life of a beloved friend, who had been for some time in a failing state of health, though his removal from us had not been considered so near as it proved to be. On reaching his bedside I found him labouring for breath—the power of speech had entirely left him. His relations in the house, in the midst of the deepest anguish, informed me that he had become alarmingly worse the evening before, that the consciousness that death was at hand had then instantly flashed on his mind, and that the sudden and overwhelming thought had drawn from his enfeebled frame the piteous exclamation, “Pray for me, pray for me, that I may not die to-night! I have done nothing for God! I have done nothing for God!”

It is true that a few hours after these sad ejaculations his anxiety seemed a little to decrease, and that not quite so hopeless an expression of countenance was observed when, on waking from a short slumber, he affectionately recognised his father watching over him.

But very soon after that, a great struggle for breath began, and we never knew exactly whether he had consciousness enough left to hear the "comfortable words" which after my arrival were read to him, words than which none could be more assuring to a dying man: "So God loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, to the end that all who believe in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins."* The spasmodic breathing was followed by a short and perfectly silent calm, but nature's last effort soon came; it was quickly over, and our dear friend was gone; his last words, excepting perhaps one short utterance of affection to his father, having been the sad ones, "I have done nothing for God!"

Now it can be of no consequence to the eternal state of a man whether the last stage of his journey through this world concluded comfortably or not. What really does matter is that his course here should have been in the right direction. It is true that nothing is more calculated than a well-founded faith to give peace at the last; yet bodily prostration and pain and various circumstances may cause the most faithful Christian to cry, "O spare me that I may recover strength before I go hence and be no more seen." It may well be imagined, however, that my friend's dying words made

* Communion Service.

a great impression on me. They were really remarkable as coming from the person who uttered them ; and the circumstances of the case may perhaps warrant a few observations which I felt constrained to make. For we have indeed a good hope respecting him, although it pleased God that his sun should go down under a cloud ; for we believe that he was a true and faithful servant of Christ, and trust, notwithstanding his sense of the nothingness of his own efforts, that his works do follow him.

Without writing an account of his life, which was not very eventful, I may mention a circumstance or two connected with it, and give a very brief description of his character. His manner ~~was~~, from childhood, singularly inoffensive and pleasing, and his disposition particularly generous. Early in life he showed evidences of a sincere and humble endeavour to follow Christ. By an interesting journal found after his death it became manifest that for a considerable period he had maintained a habit of watchful self-examination. His conscience for many years was extremely tender, and as far as human observation could extend, his behaviour was faultless ; so much so, that it was remarked to me after his death by one acquaintance, that if it were possible for any human being to live here without sin he should say that my friend was that person ; and by another, that he had long seemed more fit for heaven than earth. At Cambridge, where he took his degree, he improved his bodily frame by engaging with moderation in the outdoor exercises and amusements.

prevalent amongst undergraduates, and endeavoured to acquire a talent for teaching and to do good at the same time, by giving instruction regularly at a Sunday-school for poor children. Whilst still at Cambridge he had a dangerous and violent illness, which he bore with extraordinary patience. To all appearance he quite recovered from it, but I have no doubt his health was irretrievably weakened, for not long after leaving College he showed signs of a complaint which gradually destroyed his constitution and rendered him quite devoid of strength to resist the attack of inflammation which proved the immediate occasion of his removal. But weak though he became, he seemed to neglect no opportunities of usefulness that were left to him. As one instance of this I may mention that he frequently visited the chamber of a servant of his father's, who was confined to his bed by illness, and read the Scriptures to him; and that from his own sick bed he soon after earnestly exhorted the same person, then restored to health, to attend to the things that belonged to his peace. He modestly owned a few weeks before his death that his sincere aim had been for some time past to love God and to live according to His word. When very alarming symptoms suddenly appeared his resignation was most remarkable and touching. It is almost superfluous to say that whilst health allowed he rejoiced in attending the services of the Church, and neglected no opportunity of receiving the Holy Communion. But I am making no attempt to write a biography. Private affection and regard shall not induce

me to insert much more that I could say. The few particulars I have ventured to give will suffice for showing the tenour of the life, and something of the character, of one who at the approach of the last enemy was permitted to utter the painful cry, "I have done nothing for God!"

The first thing that naturally occurs to the mind when reflecting on the circumstances connected with this humble Christian's course and death, is to ask the question, what must often be the feelings of persons of a character directly opposed to his, when they see death coming upon them as an armed man—who then suddenly, but not till then, think of the past in connection with their obligations to Him who shed His blood for their salvation? If the unprofitableness of his earthly career was so deeply impressed at last on the mind of my friend, who had certainly not been backward to use what opportunities he had of doing good, what, when the hour of death obviously, inevitably draws near, or perhaps at the moment after that solemn hour has struck (for of some, and those not the most excellent of the earth, it is said, "there are no bands in their death")—what will then be the dismay of those who have never taken the least pains to please God, however they may have made it their study to please themselves or to stand well with their fellow-men? With what bewilderment must many be forced to look on things unseen and eternal, who only begin to regard them when their eyes are closing for ever on things seen and temporal! How many who never have

given themselves the trouble to ascertain whether they really believe the testimony of the four Gospels or not, *feel* that that testimony *is* indeed *true*, at a time when belief comes too late to allow of any opportunities of showing love to Him who gave Himself for a time to death that He might open to men the gate of everlasting life! too late for them to follow the example of His goodness and to walk in the way of His commandments! Far be it from man who knows not the heart of his neighbour to affirm that the condition of any one can be hopeless even after he has been idle till the eleventh hour. Never should we despair of any human being in this world; for we read that "whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be saved," and we know the love and the power of the Saviour who said, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." As long as there are vestiges of life and consciousness the door of hope must be left open to every one; but the fact remains that inveterate habits are not easily cast off in a moment, and that there are works not to be performed without time. And if we know that a person's life has been spent in a cold indifference if not in a sort of secret opposition to spiritual and practical Christianity, we must find it difficult to believe that a mere theoretical reception given at the very last to the facts and doctrines of the Gospel can avail him for much. We may hope there is mercy for him and encourage him to hope so too, but it would be impossible to put in the mouth of any one who is closing a negligent or selfish career, the words of Paul, "I have

fought the good fight, I have kept the faith, I have finished my course!"

On the other hand, by those who, without the compulsion of any imminent prospect of death, have sought the ways of safety, by those who at the early hours of the day have become the servants of Him who has now gone into a far country to receive to Himself a kingdom, and who know not when their Master shall return, the dying cry of my friend may be heard as an impressive warning to work "while it is day, seeing the night cometh when no man can work." He, of whom I write, could not possibly employ the self-reproaching words, "I have rejected, or at least have neglected the Gospel of Christ. I have never striven to enter in at the straight gate. I have trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing." No, he could accuse himself of none of these things. And he, too, had something better than his own works to hope in for acceptance with God, even if he might have thought that the seed of the word had brought forth some good fruit in him. Yet when the startling truth with the suddenness of lightning flashed on his perceptions that he had no longer to live in the body—when he received, as by a voice of thunder, the awful announcement, "Your earthly course is finished! your opportunities are now all past! the moments for improving your talents are all gone! an account of them is this instant to be given! you can do no more!" all that he had ever done appeared to him as painfully unworthy, as *nothing* compared with

his obligations to God as his Creator and his Redeemer, as *nothing* compared with his estimate of an adequate foundation laid up against the time to come. This is, perhaps, what he felt himself; though his surviving friends, believing that in times of health and strength he had placed his trust on a sure foundation, could comfort themselves with the confidence that, inadequate as his own works might have seemed to him when viewed in the strong light of eternity's approaching ray, both they and he are accepted before God for the sake of One who made an atonement for our sins, and Who appears as our Advocate with the Father. We may then fully trust with respect to our friend that though his last moments here were passed in the valley of humiliation, he fell asleep in the humble spirit of those who shall say when the Great Shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, "Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered and fed Thee, or thirsty and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger and took Thee in, or naked and clothed Thee? when saw we Thee in prison and came unto Thee?" and that he will in that great day hear the King say unto him, "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

I hardly know whether the feeling I am going to describe may be considered a proper one or not. But when I hear that any friend or acquaintance of my own, or any public character, is removed from this world, I do not find that I begin to ask myself whether I think

he is adjudged irrevocably to a state of happiness or misery. What most powerfully impresses me is the idea or rather the instant conviction that he is now shut out from all the means of working any more for his advancement in the eternal world. I do not mean that he will be always stationary after getting there, but that his *comparative* rank—his *relative* degree of wealth—there, is thenceforth for ever fixed. If he has done that which according to the rule of divinely abounding goodness has qualified him for authority over five cities, he will never to all eternity be able to obtain rule over ten. If he has gained but two talents he will never thenceforth be able to trade so as to acquire five.

And it often strikes me too how mortifying it must be at the last to feel that anything is left unfinished that we might have completed if we had redeemed the time and worked properly during our day. Very possibly he whose end we have been considering may have left something incomplete that he had at last no opportunity of finishing, and he may have eagerly but unavailingly wished for a few more days or hours on that account. The Apostle Paul said, "I die daily." We may none of us possess his attainments, yet, knowing how very uncertain our time is, we might with advantage often ask ourselves whether a little well-directed exertion might not enable us to put some things into useful shape which would otherwise come to nothing at our death.

Yet we may very highly appreciate the value of our

time without at all advocating asceticism or an undue neglecting of the body. Of course the spirit of self-sacrifice will make us willing for good cause to submit to pain in body as well as disappointment in mind and sorrow in soul. Still, some excellent people seem to forget that the physical constitution is really part of the whole being of man whom Christ came to save, and that if it is not properly cared for we shall not be so able as we might be to render Him good service. And though the body be allowed to be dishonoured for a season by the enemy Death, yet in every coffin lowered to the grave descends an indestructible germ from which must spring up the spiritual body at the last day. And I think we may hold to all that has been said hitherto without advocating an abstinence from amusements. Considered as mere relaxations they do not always involve a waste of time, for within proper bounds they are often good both for body and mind. It is true that some few great and extraordinary characters can be pointed to which seem to gain rather than lose authority by pursuing a mode of life totally distinct from other mens'. But there are faculties which are highly invigorated by certain kinds of social enjoyment, and men in general lose in present influence and personal advantage by declining to join in the genial amusements and relaxations of those around them. Great watchfulness is doubtless required lest we be led too far—lest we neglect more important things and pass into the regions of dissipation. The selfish man, the person who makes pleasure the pursuit

of his life, lays up a most wretched inheritance for the future; and we must always be ready so far to sacrifice our personal gratification or enjoyment as never to let it interfere with duty or with the habits of a useful course.

In fine, let each one of us, without being judges of others, and without being envious or discouraged if possessed of less conspicuous talents than those that some fellow-servants are endowed with, endeavour earnestly to serve our generation according to the will of God, and to lay up a good foundation against the time to come, laying hold on eternal life. Faith can only be proved by works. If we have only one talent, let us use that aright and not hastily and impatiently seek to leave the calling wherein we were called. It may be that we can do little more than exercise *patience* in running the race that is set before us—that we may have nothing more costly than a cup of cold water to give for Christ's sake—that we may be able to plead for Him only by the humble argument of a submissive Christian life. But however unobserved of all but Our Heavenly Father, however small our offerings, let them be made in the spirit that drew from Our Saviour the comforting sentence, "She hath done what she could." And whatever our worldly trials, whatever our future hopes may be, let us never desire to have our life here for one moment shortened; for only here are to be found the opportunities of showing our submission to the will of God, of faithfully doing His commandments, and of performing the works which after our time of

probation, shall in a more exalted state of being, follow those who are so blessed as to die in the Lord. If any useful lesson is to be learnt by a Christian person from the circumstances attending the death of my dear and amiable friend, it must be that which is offered to us in the words of the Preacher : “ Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might ; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.”

VI.

THOUGHTS ON THE NATIONALITY, AS
CONCERNING THE FLESH, OF THE MAN
CHRIST JESUS.

IN *Neander's Life of Christ* I read to-day* that "Christianity overthrows all natural barriers, and binds mankind together by a union founded on the common alliance of their nature to God" (chap. iv. The Church and Baptism). Shortly following this weighty and suggestive sentence, comes an apt quotation from Zeno, who taught that "men should not be separated by cities, states, and laws, but that all should be considered fellow-citizens and partakers of one life, and that the whole world like a united flock should be governed by one common law." But it appears, a little further on, that of this dictum very short work was made by Plutarch, who is next quoted as saying, "Zeno had some phantom of a dream before him when he wrote."

Yet the words of Zeno may serve to show us how the ancient sages could yearn in spirit for a union

* 12 June, 1857.

which would embrace all mankind, visionary as such a notion must have appeared to observers of human nature in old heathen times. The good sense of Plutarch, viewing things as they really were in the days of Nero and Vespasian, led him to consider the establishment of the union hoped for by the philosopher as simply impracticable. Human nature, as he knew it, was not likely to break through the ties of nationality by virtue of any inherent force it possessed of universally extending benevolence; and he perceived the absurdity of expecting any degree of brotherly fellowship to flourish between the citizens of rival states. But what is impossible with men is possible with God. Even while Plutarch was writing, something was growing up, though in the midst of wars and tumults, which should prove a real bond of union between men, a bond too strong to be broken by the rivalries of the different states, or even by the wars of the different countries, to which as individuals they might belong.

When the Son of God had come and had suffered in the flesh, it was said of Him that He had "made of twain, one new man"—that He had "made both, one." The "*twain*," and the "*both*," refer to two types of men as different as well could be, namely, Jew and Gentile. The "middle wall of partition" between these two had always been so strong that it was thought it never could be "broken down." And yet those who had been kept outside, "afar off," did at length become united with those who were "nigh."

And then all who believed in Christ were One, even as He in and with the Father is ONE. Though men could not possibly be all of the same nation, yet the distinction of "stranger and foreigner" was, as far as Christianity was concerned, altogether abolished. The dream of Zeno had, after all, begun to come true. Men of different states, people under diverse laws, were becoming "fellow-citizens," united as members of one "household," joined together as consecrated parts of one living "temple." The Church truly catholic is no respecter of persons, and recognises no distinctive character of Greek or Jew, Scythian, or Barbarian, master or servant. The Christian in England loves as a brother his fellow-member in Christ's body in France, in Germany, or in Africa, though his manners, tastes, and opinions in general are as different as they can possibly be. And doubtless there are often Christians in each of two hostile armies, men who personally love each other, though duty and patriotism compel them to fight on adverse sides.

Observations such as the preceding may seem to spring naturally enough from a direct contemplation of Neander's remark, and the sayings which he quotes. But a good suggestive saying oftentimes gives rise to thoughts that travel rather far; and whilst thoroughly agreeing with the spirit of the original remark, we may look on the subject from other points of view to which our own reflections may lead us. And thus, whilst thinking of the distinctive difference between men of

various tongues and nations, and of the barriers which mere human nature will always find impeding their union, or will make if it does not find them ready made, I was led to view the nationality of Our blessed Lord Himself, as far as His earthly existence was concerned, in an aspect with which I had not been familiarised before. It may not be out of place to note the course taken by my thoughts, though their only possible claim for attention can rest on the advantage which always arises from observing whatever helps to illustrate the providence or indicate the wisdom of God.

Every one of us knows that Our Saviour, as concerning the flesh, was of the kindred of the Jews; and that He was born in the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But though a Deliverer was certainly expected about the time of His appearing who should save the chosen generation from all its enemies, and gather together in one to the glorious land the children of God that were scattered abroad and place them in a position of great power and dignity, it is very remarkable that, almost immediately after the advent of Christ, the ancient Jewish nation, which had survived so many great and sore trials, began to be broken up, and that it was so completely overturned before His religion spread much, that as a body politic it soon ceased to exist. And it strikes me now as a very noteworthy thing in the wonderful providence of God, that the Founder of the only community which could by possibility be both universal and truly united—that He who becomes the Head of that one body His Church, He of

Whom the whole family in Heaven and earth is named, should be born of a race which then ceased almost at once to possess a local habitation and political existence to keep its members together; yet of a race, however scattered and humiliated, that continues and will continue in personal existence—a race too which I suppose is the only one of those hostile to Christianity which may be said in general terms to possess anything like a high state of civilisation.

These things appear to have been providential in the highest degree, and it may be perhaps permitted to us to mark the wisdom of God which so ordered them. We could never reconcile ourselves to the idea of a Saviour coming of a barbarous people who were without proper views, as far as could have then been revealed, of the true God. But we may perhaps imagine what sinister effects would have followed if two or three of the conditions which actually obtained had been reversed. For instance, we may, without irreverence, suppose what must have happened if a Divine Saviour had come of a nation with all the privileges, but without the obstinacy, of the Jews—which should immediately have adopted His religion and have become at once great and powerful instead of having brought down upon itself ruin by His rejection. In such a case Christ's Kingdom would have been of this world. Its conquests would hardly have been the victories of the Cross. Or, let us suppose that instead of taking upon Himself the seed of Abraham at a time when it was

just about to become an astonishment, a proverb and a byword wherever it was driven, the Lord of Glory had been born of a people still existing as a nation and possessing political power to the present time. The history of the past and the events we see taking place in our own times show us how envy, certainly the lust of dominion spiritual and temporal, and many other evil passions, would have followed. We know something of the miseries and mischief that have resulted from the weakly-founded claim of the hierarchy of one city whose chief pretends to be the successor of one of the Apostles of Our Lord. To what intolerable dominion would not Rome be aspiring if it could be asserted not only that St. Peter had been Bishop over it, but that Our Lord had been born there, and had taught in its streets. Or, if it be not wrong to stretch our imaginations so far, suppose that Our Lord had come of a great and high-spirited nation, such as that whose land is separated from ours by only a narrow strait. Would not the people of a country like France be even more determined in that case than they have ever been yet to aspire to the exercise of lordship over other nations? Would not their pursuit of even martial glory have an additional stimulus if they could say that their nation had been marked as the foremost of the earth by personal connection with the Messiah? Judging by what has been seen and what we still see, should we conclude if they could boast of such a distinction, that quietness and harmony, or impatience

and discord, would be promoted? And other nations would be envious of a people so favoured, and might be prejudiced against the cause of Christ in consequence.

But no one envies the Jews, though no doubt whatever exists that the Man Christ Jesus, in whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily, was of the Children of Israel, whilst it is a matter only of fair inquiry whether St. Peter was ever at Rome. There can be no idea of any mischievous rivalry with a people whose ancient land has been for eighteen centuries, and still is, trodden down of Gentiles; and whose capital, that once witnessed the humble triumph of the Messiah, now acknowledges the hated sway of unbelievers, and scarcely tolerates the presence of any of the race of its ancient divinely appointed possessors. So entirely distinct indeed are the Jews from every other people on earth, so entirely unique are they in their experiences, habits and aspirations, that we may without difficulty believe that when "the word which Isaiah saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem" shall come to pass, and "the mountain of the Lord's House shall be established on the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills, all nations shall flow unto it" with no envious feelings; and that there will be no pretensions raised to the peculiar privileges and distinctions of the Jews on the part of any other people. None shall then be jealous of the Holy City adorned in bridal array. Whilst no other people could be so aggrandised as we believe the Jewish nation shall be

at length, without a serious disturbance of the balance of power, the minds of politicians need feel no disquietude from the re-instalment of the peculiar people in their own land, and from their importance as a great nation, when "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

VII.

THOUGHTS ON SOME PASSAGES IN THE
LAW AND THE PROPHETS, RESULTING
FROM A CONSIDERATION OF THE TWO
ENFORCEMENTS OF THE FOURTH COM-
MANDMENT.

PEOPLE who have but a very cursory acquaintance with the Scriptures must be aware that two statements of the Ten Commandments are to be found in the Pentateuch. In both instances it may be said that the Enactments or Commands are identical in substance and order, although slight variations appear in the wording. And the Enforcements, or Reasons, where given, are the same or similar in both cases, with one exception. But that exception is a very remarkable one and presents a considerable difficulty. The Enforcement to the command to keep the Sabbath holy, as stated in Deuteronomy v., is entirely different from that which is recorded in the original history of the giving of the Law in Exodus xx. Moses, the Historian, tells us, as generally understood, that in the midst of the thunders and lightnings and the tremblings of Sinai, the Almighty uttered in conclusion of the Fourth

Commandment the well-known words which we hear every Sunday morning, "For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath-day and hallowed it." But Moses, the Legislator, in his farewell address to his people, Moses, the Mediator, who had actually stood between the LORD and them, and who when at the point of finishing his labours and laying down his office, solemnly declared to them the Law, thus stated the Enforcement of the same Commandment: "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched-out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath-day." The two Enforcements, then, of this particular Commandment are not by any means to the same effect, but are as different as two things can possibly be, the one from the other.

Now there is one particular fact that I have not yet mentioned which makes the difficulty I have alluded to so apparently insuperable; for, but for the existence of that fact, it might very well be said, as has been said, with reference to these two very diverse enforcements, that "the people on the borders of Canaan knew the original reason for the Sabbath, but were also required to remember their oppressed state in Egypt, and their deliverance therefrom;" or, again, that "*different* motives are *not discordant* motives." Perfectly true remarks, but I wonder the excellent men who penned

them could have thought they would prove satisfactory and conclusive in the present case, or remove the real difficulty, which certainly appears to do nothing less than involve a perfect contradiction between one part in the Pentateuch and another.

For in Ex. xx. 1, we read in our Bibles, "God spake *all these words* ;" and afterwards follow the Ten Commandments in their ordinary form. And in Deut. v. 22, we read that Moses, after recapitulating the Ten Commandments with the important variation already noticed, said, "These words the LORD spake . . . and He *added no more*."* The difficulty presented by this statement of Moses is obvious. Deuteronomy seems to give a complete contradiction to Exodus, not simply because Moses in his recapitulation gave the reason of the Deliverance from Egypt, but because after giving it, he is represented as saying, "These words the LORD spake and *He added no more*." Such a version of the transaction would naturally lead us to understand that Moses in Deuteronomy repeated the precise words uttered on Sinai, and that *no further* words than those were spoken by the LORD on occasion of the delivering of the Ten Commandments ; whereas

* To make my meaning the more clear I have omitted above that part of the verse which has no bearing on the immediate point ; but to avoid all imputation of a desire to withhold anything, it may be as well to give the whole passage here, which is as follows :

"These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice : And He added no more. And He wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me."

in Exodus there *is* something *added* to the Fourth Commandment which Moses did *not mention* in Deuteronomy. As our Bible stands, it would seem in Exodus that God uttered words that He could not have spoken according to Moses' statement in Deuteronomy; which omits the allusion to creation, at the same time that it declares that God *added no more*. It is this short expression that all the comments I have ever met fail to explain. They are perfectly justified in saying that a law may be based on more reasons than one, but a vague observation like that does not help us to understand one statement in the Bible which seems directly to negative another. Those who maintain the plenary and verbal inspiration of all parts of Scripture should hardly dismiss such difficult points with generalities which amount to nothing at all.

Whilst, however, I am unable to approve of this plan of ignoring a difficulty, I can no better agree with those, of whom there is no lack at present, who turn the passages under consideration to account, for their purpose of objecting altogether to the genuineness and authenticity of the Pentateuch. They maintain that as the two statements contradict each other, they cannot both be true—that probably neither of them is true—that if Moses wrote the Book of Exodus he could not have written Deuteronomy, or have even delivered the discourses recorded therein—that probably neither of the said Books was the work of Moses, as both could not certainly have been. But I do not think these propositions are established by what we have before us

at present. One thing that strikes me rather forcibly is this. It is evident that Exodus was written before Deuteronomy, and every Jew firmly believed Exodus to have been the work of Moses. There could have been no forger of Deuteronomy without the Book of Exodus in his hands. Knowing the veneration of the Jews for Moses and his works, would any forger have dared to have made so manifest a variation on so important a point as that we are considering? Would he not in a statement of the Decalogue have transcribed the precise words detailed in Exodus? I think therefore that, provided any satisfactory explanation can be offered, the instance is in favour of those who maintain that Moses was the writer (generally) of all the Books of the Pentateuch.

My humble opinion is that a satisfactory explanation can be made. I venture to hope that the difficulty may be solved by means of a perfectly justifiable modification of the way in which the expressions "*all these words*," and "*these words*," in Ex. xx. 1, and in Deut. v. 22, are generally understood. In each of these instances I propose to alter the translation of the noun rendered in our version *words*. I hope to show not only that we should be justified in rendering it *Commandments*, but that a consideration of some other passages requires us so to render it here. And if we do so, I think we shall find that the principal difficulty vanishes at once.

If any one will take the pains to look through the Old Testament, I do not believe that, from beginning

to end, he will meet with the familiar expression "the Ten Commandments" more than twice; viz., in Ex. xxxiv. 28, and Deut. x. 4. And it will be observed, with reference to each of these cases, by a person examining the margin of our Bible, that the noun "*words*" is in both places there substituted for *Commandments*. There is but one other place that I should notice where the same expression occurs with the omission only of the article *the*, viz., in Deut. iv. 13, and here we miss the marginal criticism afforded by the translators in the two other cases; but this omission is merely an example of the inconsistencies abounding in our version, for the original for *Commandments* is the same in all three instances. If any one will refer to Dr. Adam Clarke's useful though sometimes curious Commentary, he will find the Hebrew expressions given under Ex. xx. The original for "*all these words*" in the first verse of that chapter he gives as *et col ha-debarim ha-ellah*, and for "the *Ten Commandments*" in other places, *êsereth ha-debarim*. And if any one will inquire of a Hebrew scholar, or consult Wigram's Englishman's Hebrew Concordance,* he may learn that in the following Scripture references to the Ten Commandments, where the English noun *word* appears in our Bible, viz., in Ex. xx. 1, "these *words*"; Ex. xxxiv. 1, "the *words* that were in the first table"; and Deut. v. 22, "these *words*," the Hebrew noun for *words* is the same as that which is invariably used whenever the expression *the Ten Commandments* occurs, being indeed the common term for "*word*,"

* Both of which I have done.

dabār or *dāhvāhr*, in various forms. Thus the noun always means *Commandments* when used with reference to the laws of the two tables, and I only ask that it should be *translated Commandments* in Ex. xx. 1, and Deut. v. 22, as it is in Ex. xxxiv. 28, Deut. iv. 13 and x. 4. We should then, in the two cases under consideration, read thus: "God uttered all these *Commandments*" (Ex. xx. 1); and, "All these *Commandments* the LORD spake unto your assembly and He added no more" (Deut. v. 22). The difference, though apparently slight, is really important; for the last quoted passage might then signify, "No more Commandments whatever were given by the LORD from Sinai." It need not be taken to mean, as it seems by our Bible, that everything was said on Sinai in the exact words that Moses employed near Jordan, or that nothing whatever was added; but simply that there was no additional Commandment, no eleventh Commandment—the code was complete.

This rendering would clear away much difficulty, because if adopted we need no longer consider Moses, whether regarded as the writer of Deuteronomy or the venerated and inspired instructor of his people, to be pledged to the assertion that, when the Fourth Commandment was given from Sinai, God made the reason of the *Deliverance from Egypt* a part of it. But Moses does seem to be so pledged by his farewell address, if we retain the present authorised translation. Further too, he may be said, according to that, to have declared in effect that the Almighty did not give the enforcement

from *Creation*, which, in Exodus, God is certainly stated by the Authorised Version to have done.*

And now if we think of the genuine meaning of the noun "Commandment," we may see that its simplest form will be an imperative word, as "Go" or "Come;" or if it is prohibitive two words will suffice, as "Steal not," "Kill not;" or at most, except when complicated conditions are mentioned, a very short phrase is sufficient, as "Remember the Sabbath day as holy." Such forms of command, so short and plain, might well make the terms "Commandment" and "Word" synonymous.

An enforcement or a reason is no part of a commandment. But what could be more likely or natural to

* The Hebrew expressions for *spake* and *words* in Ex. xx. 1, appear, by the concordance referred to, to be the same, that is as nearly so as a verb and a noun can possibly be. I admit that in the vast majority of cases the verb is translated *speak*, and the noun *word*, but many other renderings occur in our Bible, amongst which there are of the verb as follows, *tell, declare, pronounce, utter, appoint, command, give, publish, rehearse, teach*; and of the noun the following, *commandment, thing, cause, matter, decree, business*. But an entirely different Hebrew word is used for *saying* (at the end of the verse). Might we not then understand vv. 1 and 2 thus, "And God commanded (or to avoid tautology in English, *pronounced* or *published*) all those commandments, saying (as a preface or introduction thereto) I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee, &c., &c.?"

I am ready to acknowledge that though the word *dābār* is certainly used for *commandments* where the prefix, "the ten," makes us quite certain that the Laws of the two tables are referred to, it is not by any means the most frequent word for *commandments* in the sense of Mosaic statutes, ordinances for ritual observances, &c. However, the word might very well be translated *commandment* in more places than it is. See for instance Ex. xxiv. 3, 4, 8, xxxv. 1, Deut. iv. 36, xii. 28, &c., &c.

character than that the faithful Moses, who spared himself no pains for the glory of God and the welfare of Israel, should have taken the opportunity, in his affectionate and lengthened farewell address, of enforcing the Law of God and explaining its reasonableness to his people? And it seems to me that Deut. v. 14 (latter part) and 15, respecting the deliverance from Egypt, was just such an explanation or enforcement. It was part *not of the Commandment* but of *Moses' speech*.

I have said enough, perhaps, to show how I think these parts of Exodus and Deuteronomy, which at first seemed to contradict each other, may be reconciled, and the apparent difficulty obviated by the justifiable, and I trust improved alteration in the rendering of a single noun. If so, the immediate object for which this paper was taken in hand is accomplished. I might, therefore, leave off here if I did not think it reasonable to carry the matter a little further still.

If we agree that the addition to the Fourth Commandment in the recapitulation was to be attributed to Moses, and there seems to be no escape from this admission, how can we prove that the Enforcement to the same Commandment, which is mentioned in Ex. xx., namely, that from Creation, was not added by Moses also? In his writings, as well as in his oral addresses, he was the same faithful and assiduous man, anxious to explain and to render impressive the law of his God. With respect to the writing on the two tables we are expressly told, "He wrote upon the tables the words of

the covenant, *the ten words*." (Ex. xxxiv. 28, margin). This expression would readily lead us towards the belief that the Almighty's voice and hand gave the articles of the Decalogue in the form of authoritative Commandments as simply as they could be stated, short, and each as it were in a word. And we do really find that in such a form those which were quoted by Our Saviour were stated by Him, the Fifth Commandment on two distinct occasions* having been recited by Him without the additions thereto which we find in Exodus and Deuteronomy. St. Paul, it is true, does allude to the sequel of the Fifth Commandment, but his purpose was equally answered whether it were simply a part of Scripture written by Moses, or an utterance direct from the mouth of the Almighty. For Paul, at all events, looked on Moses as a true and inspired Prophet, and whatever the Apostle could find in Scripture he seems to have considered available as authority; he does not scruple to quote, for instance, even the sayings of Job's blameable friends. (1 Cor. iii. 19, Job v. 13.)

Is there anything in Ex. xx. 9-11 to make it absolutely necessary for us to believe that the Enforcement there appearing as an addition to the law of the Sabbath was actually pronounced by the Almighty? The words are not "In six days I made heaven and earth," &c., but all is in the the third person. Equally so are

* To the Scribes and Pharisees, Matt. xv. 4, and Mark vii. 10, and to the young Ruler, Matt. xix. 19, Mark x. 19, and Luke xviii. 20. To the latter Our Lord quoted five of the Commandments.

the sequels to the Third and the Fifth Commandments, the imperative parts of which end at the words "vain" and "mother." It is true that in the case of the Second Commandment the addition or enforcement is in the first person: "I the Lord," &c. But if we are obliged from this circumstance to admit that God really uttered these additional words in delivering the Commandment against idolatry, the exception would make my case all the stronger with respect to the Fourth Commandment, where the addition is not in the first person. But I do not think that too much should be made of these niceties, for one *actual Command*, the Third, is altogether stated as if delivered by a third person. The sacred writers, wonderful masters of language as they were, certainly did not use it with that precision which is expected in modern tongues. Small connecting or explanatory clauses are omitted by them occasionally, sometimes supplied, sometimes not, by our translators. Changes of person, without the slightest notice, are found in other parts besides the writings of Moses.* It is an undoubted fact also that in the narrative parts of the Pentateuch there are several interpolations which could not possibly have been penned by Moses. I do not say that this occurred with respect to the

* There are instances in the Psalms, of which Ps. xci. 13, 14, may be cited as one. In Micah vi. 6-8, it is not clear whether the prophet is speaking throughout, or whether Balak speaks in verses 6 and 7, and Balaam or Micah in v. 8, for there is nothing to indicate change of person. Even in St. Paul's Epistles it is very difficult to know sometimes where he represents himself, and where an imaginary objector is speaking. See also Rev. xxii. 7-9.

account of the Delivery of the Law, but I must ask if it is not possible that Moses, wherever he referred to that transaction, endeavoured to make it more impressive by quoting such declarations as the Almighty made of Himself and of His Name in Ex. xxxiv. 7 and 14, and that these quotations, with other comments of Moses, always appearing in connection with the Commandments, should before long have become incorporated with them? Could we wonder that they should in time become part of the text?

I trust it will not be said that I am wishing to get rid of the meaning of Scripture while I only wish to understand that meaning; or that I am so audacious as to take away part of a Divine Commandment; for it is Moses himself who has done so (Deut. v. 22), if it has been done at all, which is the point I cannot admit. If any one of the writers of the several commentaries that I possess had deigned to bestow the least notice on the expression "He added no more" (Deut. v. 22), there might perhaps have been no occasion for the present inquiry. It may certainly be owing to my too limited reading that I have as yet found no explanation. However poor one's opportunities and abilities may be, one should not be blamed perhaps for trying how a difficulty may be solved, and one part of Scripture be prevented from appearing antagonistic to another.

And it is a remarkable thing that the Pentateuch is sometimes far from precise, even in things which seem stated with the greatest precision. I am not insensible to the objection that the account in Deut. v. 5-21 does

not seem to *read* in accordance with my view, and that the text would thus require additions which some might think that only a distorted ingenuity could supply. But on the other hand I may be allowed to ask if every one in reading the first and second verses of Ex. ii. by themselves, would not be led to the belief that Moses was the eldest child of Amram by the wife he is described as taking of the daughters of Levi? There are things there that seem to follow in most regular sequence; so precise is the account that a circumstance is mentioned which we should never think of stating. And if there were *merely some critical grounds* for concluding that Aaron, who was also the son of Amram by Jochebed, was older than Moses, is it not almost certain that many, who receive every part of Scripture as literally exact, would say that it was tampering with the authority of the sacred records to hint at such a thing? And is not much ingenuity justifiably expended in reconciling the different accounts of St. Paul's conversion in the Acts?

If the clause "For in six days the Lord made Heaven and earth," &c., really formed part of the Fourth Commandment (though it is not easy to understand how an allusion to a past transaction can form an integral part of a Commandment), how came Moses to omit it entirely when rehearsing the Ten Commandments on the solemn occasion of his address to his people just before his death? If, on the other hand, the reason from Creation, equally with that of the Deliverance from Egypt, were an enforcement which

Moses endeavoured to impress on his stiff-necked people, all would be easy of explanation.

There are many men in all respects, except in an honest desire for the discovery of truth, superior to myself, with whose strongly-expressed opinions regarding the way in which the early chapters in Genesis are to be understood, mine do not now entirely coincide. They are perfectly right in doing their best to uphold their own convictions. Early associations and natural love of ease would make me too glad to retain such opinions myself if I could conscientiously do so. I hope therefore that if I am about to say anything wrong, my error or defect in judgment may be charitably regarded. For I cannot but own that as the Israelites must have believed from the way in which the matter was put, that the Heavens and the earth were actually made and finished in six literal days from their commencement—in six days, I mean, of what we should now call twenty-four hours each—I say I cannot but own that it is some comfort to me to think that it was not an utterance direct from the mouth of the Almighty Creator Himself that taught them this. The actual legislation was in respect of a real week of seven ordinary days, and it appears to me to be most plain that Moses and the Israelites understood the ancient records of creation to mean that the Heavens and the earth were from first to last made and completed in seven days of the usual length. Otherwise it is difficult to see how the illustration could have had any value to the Israelites. Whatever can be proved to have been an utterance of

the Almighty it would be the height of irreverence for us to raise any question about, and if it can be shown beyond debate that the words came really from His mouth, I will reverently accept them, however difficult it may be in the present imperfect state of our knowledge to reconcile them with what we understand by the revelation He has made of Himself in His works. Still we cannot help contrasting the perfect knowledge inherent in the Almighty Creator and Upholder of all things, with the limited scientific attainments of the legislator who was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. Inspired he was for a grand and noble purpose, and for the instruction not only of his people but of the world in great and eternal truths; yet his science was probably that which he received in his early training, and acquired in his subsequent wanderings by the powerful assistance of his own observation. And notwithstanding the moral and spiritual instruction that was vouchsafed through Moses, and the Prophets succeeding him, it would appear by the writings of the sweet Psalmist of Israel and other sacred effusions, that very little accurate acquaintance with natural philosophy or physics, with the movements of the heavenly bodies or the structure of this globe, could have been possessed in the nation, either by people or King. We think now that God's revelation by Nature has taught us almost as certainly that the world was not made in the space of six ordinary days as that the sun does not literally start afresh on his race every

morning and return after his joyous course to a tabernacle of celestial repose every night.

We may certainly gather that it did not seem fitting to Divine Wisdom to startle the Israelites either in the time of Moses or of David with the announcement of the immense periods, whether of tens of thousands or of some millions of years each, which every one of several separate processes must have required for its course whilst this now habitable globe was being brought into a state of fitness for the accommodation of its present tenant, Man. How much commotion a glimpse of the idea has caused in our time! How impossible it would have been for the old Israelites to receive it! But now that most of us can entertain the consideration with some degree of calmness, I think that if properly viewed it may prove to be not only innocuous but salutary to us. Its incomprehensible vastness may be a starting point from which we may proceed to contemplate something vaster and more incomprehensible still. It cannot indeed teach us to understand the existence from everlasting to everlasting of the Designer and Maker of all, but it may in some slight measure help us to appreciate the greatness of this mystery, by showing us what God's eternity must exceed.

The idea may be illustrated as well by distance as duration. Thus, we can measure with some accuracy an immense line, the diameter I will not say of the world's bulk only, but of its orbit, and from that

ascertained length we try to discover the parallax of a certain bright fixed star. But till very lately it has been found that the immense stretch of the earth's orbit of which the radius is 92,000,000 of miles, is too small to form an appreciable unit in the calculation which was thus considered to be almost impossible of achievement. And even to this day, if an approximate idea has been reached of the distance of a very few fixed stars, what we know respecting the distance of the others amounts but to this, that the figures that would express it must be incontestably beyond the product of 92,000,000 miles multiplied by some enormous number, say certainly above 200,000. There are not more I believe than ten fixed stars whose distances are tolerably well ascertained. But with these few exceptions "the vast multitude of bodies which compose the universe and which are nightly seen glittering in the firmament are at distances from the solar system greater than that which would produce an apparent displacement amounting to the tenth of a second. This limit of distance is ten parallaxic units."* From which it appears that the distance of all but a few of the stars must be *greater* than 2,000,000 times the space between the earth and the sun, *how much greater we know not*. But there are many bright stars of which it can only be said that they must be greatly beyond that stage in space. What then are we to say of those much less bright than the stars of which observers have been vainly striving to obtain a parallax, and

* Lardner's Popular Astronomy.

therefore vastly more distant still? And yet again of the hazy clusters which must be enormously farther off than the smallest observable star? These bewildering distances, that must necessarily be beyond a known limit, which is in itself too enormous for us to form any conception of, are not too wide for the control of the Almighty Hand which placed worlds at their extremities. Immeasurable as they are, we know that Almighty Power stretches beyond them. I have only noted these conclusions with respect to distant *space* because they may by analogy help our thoughts when trying to get some measure of distant *time*. As all that we can know of most of the stars is that their distance must be immensely *beyond* some certain numbers of millions of miles, calculable indeed but utterly inconceivable, so all that we can know of the age of this world as an independent revolving planet is, that it must have existed long *before* a date which may be represented as the sum of the ages that must have been required for many various processes of change and improvement which have gradually rendered it what it is, a place fit for man to work and develop his energies upon. We are more likely to gauge the distance of the star which takes ages to throw its minute ray of light to the assisted eye of the astronomer than we are to obtain a remote conception of the age of this globe. But our reflections on the immensity of this measure of duration may be very serviceable to us when we try to look towards the truth of the pre-existence of the Eternal King who planned and created all; they may

help to impress us with a wholesome reverence when we think of the perfection of the Awful and Eternal Being with Whom one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.

We have thus advantages in forming our conceptions of some of the Divine attributes which I think we do well, and not ill, in making use of—advantages which in the times of the writers of Scripture did not exist. But it would be uncandid to ascribe to ignorance all that we read in the Bible inconsistent with the expression of scientific truth. Neither in popular nor in poetical language do we look for philosophical terms, and there is much of each of these varieties in Scripture. But I see no occasion to be minutely careful to fix their precise limits, or to distress ourselves if, when the writers were intending to speak the exact language of fact, their impressions of historical or physical truth were not always correct. It may be a matter of critical interest to mark the boundary of poetic licence and sober statement, but why otherwise should I care if the latter is sometimes inexact, if I feel certain that the best course was taken to benefit the contemporaries of the inspired writer, and if I can yet, by studying his words in a proper spirit, obtain a useful lesson for myself? A moral instructor is not false if he adapts his teaching to the received though not philosophically correct ideas of his scholars. In teaching children or savages, or very ignorant persons, it is almost impossible to avoid doing so to some extent, and I suppose it always will be. In recent times some

excellent moral lessons used to be based on the story of the unnatural wickedness of the imperious and violent Tullia, and other things which were thought very good history. Since Niebuhr and Arnold have concluded their investigations we do not deem such instruction false, though the facts may have crumbled to nothing in their hands. Thus I cannot agree with those who consider they make an unassailable statement when they say that the words of the inspired St. James, "Ye have heard of the patience of Job," do certify the literal truth of the whole account we find in the Old Testament of the history of that patriarch. Without wishing in any way to dispute the authenticity of the wonderful and instructive Book of Job, I cannot consider that the words of St. James prove it any more than I should think that any sober, religious man, by saying of a friend that "he was as strong as Hercules" or "as valiant as Achilles," pledged himself to a belief in all the mythological legends respecting those heroes. And it seems to me no more reasonable to conclude that Moses must have been the exclusive author of certain Books because they go under his name in the New Testament, than it would be to say that when a scholar quotes a line as being in the third book of Homer's "Iliad" or "Odyssey" he affirmed his belief that everything contained in those two poems was the work of "the blind old man of Scio's rocky isle." Moreover, such a deduction as the one I am objecting to would carry us too far; for if always insisted on, how should we escape the necessity of receiving as canonical

the apocryphal Book of Enoch (quoted by Jude)? of believing in the purchase of a field by Abraham some years after his own death (according to the speech of Stephen)? and perhaps even in the degradation of angels by forming unions with the daughters of men (Jude and Peter)?

It is difficult to help thinking that a great deal too much importance is sometimes made to hinge on the question of the authorship of the Pentateuch, for the truth and value of a book cannot invariably depend on its having been written throughout by the person whose name it conventionally bears. No one even thinks that the two Books of Samuel were written by that Judge of Israel. It is true that "Moses" is frequently quoted in the New Testament, but we also hear there of "the Law and the Prophets," yet no one will be so unwise as to say that everything in the former of these two divisions partook of the nature of a *Law*. The names I have mentioned were doubtless headings under which portions of the Old Testament were placed. Some have thought that the prophecies were classified under different heads, or that they all went under the general title of *Jeremiah*, as it can hardly be denied that Jeremiah was once named when Zechariah was intended. Even if part of the book which goes by the name of Isaiah cannot be incontestably proved to be the work of that Prophet, shall we reject it merely on that account? shall we shut our ears to its sublime and comforting words, because we are hardly sure whether Isaiah or some other great prophet was inspired to utter them?

But there is a set of prophecies with reference to which a similar question must not be admitted. Though we may be correct in believing the latter part of the Book of Isaiah, equally with the former, to have been written by him, I do not know of any declaration made therein that it is so. But the predictions in the Book of *Daniel* are on a very different footing, because they do profess to have been written by that greatly beloved man himself. It is a common thing in the present day to hear this denied—to hear it said that the Book was not written even in Daniel's time—that as its supposed predictions were clear up to the date of Antiochus Epiphanes and then became somewhat obscure, it is plain they were penned during the struggle with that tyrant, and published for the comfort and encouragement of the afflicted Jews as they were being roused to resistance by the heroic Maccabees.

The tendency of a statement such as this is of course destructive of all confidence in the Book of Daniel; but the hypothesis seems on the face of it unreasonable. We may well believe that the Book of Daniel *would* have afforded the faithful Jews very great support and hope, provided it had been one of their recognised and sacred books before the struggle commenced, but it is difficult to see how it could have helped them if it were for the first time brought forward at that juncture as a work never previously heard of. It is a favourite statement now-a-days that the Apocalypse of St. John was written for very similar objects at the time the Christians were disquieted by the Roman war before

the destruction of Jerusalem. Without at all admitting that the Book of Revelation had no higher ends than that, or that it must have been written before the conclusion of the war, I must remark that the cases are essentially different, inasmuch as the latter Book makes no profession of an existence anterior to the time of that war, and the Christians who received it in the days of the Apostle John knew it to have been then only just composed; its success would not depend on any presumed antiquity, as the influence of the Apocalyptic predictions of Daniel would in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes.

Another thing that has forcibly struck me lately is that the evidence of Josephus is not made enough of with respect to the Book of Daniel. Josephus was by no means a credulous man; and it appears by his works that he unquestionably believed that the Book of Daniel existed before the time of the Maccabees, for he mentions in the plainest possible terms that it was shown to Alexander the Great.* Such an event if it ever took place must have been about the year 332 B.C., that is at least a hundred and sixty years before the time of the Maccabees. In another place Josephus is very explicit. He says (*Ant.* xii. 7, § 6) "And this desolation (by Antiochus) came to pass according to the prophecy of Daniel which was given four hundred and eight years before." He writes in nearly similar words

* "And when the Book of Daniel was showed him wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the Empire of the Persians," &c. (*Whiston's Josephus Ant.* xi. 8, § 5).

in other places (x. 11, § 7, &c.) and does not confine his notice to the predictions accomplished, but plainly alludes to those yet unfulfilled, in his time, and as plainly refers those of his readers who were desirous of knowing truth about things then future, to the Book of Daniel. Whether all the statements of Josephus on matters of history are correct or not, there can be no doubt whatever that his words quoted show the opinion of a highly educated Jew who had seen much, not only in his own but foreign lands, a man of the world (as we should say) who flourished soon after the time of Our Saviour ; and they prove not only that he felt certain that the predictions of Daniel were genuine and that they were known to have received signal accomplishment up to the times of Alexander and Antiochus respectively, but that they were also *after that*, that is up to the time of Josephus himself, continuing to be fulfilled, and that they would in times future to his own receive their perfect fulfilment. The idea that the prophecies were not correct when referring to anything subsequent to the period of Antiochus never suggested itself to the observing man who at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem considered that the events of his own day were bearing witness to their truth. As far as I can ascertain, there were no aspersions on their genuineness till it was found convenient by some men to make them after Josephus' time.

And we must not forget that the most important of all the prophecies of Daniel extend much further than to the times of Antiochus and the Maccabees. For

when were the 24th, 25th, 26th, and 27th verses of the ninth chapter of Daniel written? Most certainly they were in existence generations before the coming of Our Lord, and yet they would be just as wonderful if published in the time of Antiochus, as in the time of Darius the Median. For whatever may be the precise commencement and conclusion of the "seventy weeks" (of years), of the "seven weeks and the threescore and two weeks," and of the "one week," who can now doubt for a moment on reading the verses I have referred to that the coming of Jesus Christ, his work, and his sacrifice, the bringing in of the Christian religion, the conclusion of the sacred canon, the entire abolition of the Mosaic dispensation, and the complete overthrow of the Jewish people by the Romans, were every one of them noted, in explicit terms that look almost too plain for prophecy, generations before they occurred, in these Scriptures of truth? If other parts of Daniel were written in the time of *Antiochus*, of which there is not the shadow of proof that I ever heard of, certainly this part was not written in the time of *Christ*. The tyrannical monarch was certainly not more plainly alluded to than was "Messiah the Prince." And it cannot be said that these prophecies brought about their own fulfilment, for the Jews resisted the Romans, and fought against the destruction that was coming on them to the utmost of their power.

I have not alluded yet to what some persons please to call the legendary part of the Book of Daniel. One strong objection made to it is founded on the state-

ment that some of the terms employed are derived from the Greek, and could not have made their way to the captive Jews in Daniel's time. But some learned men now hold that there was sufficient communication between the Greeks and Babylonians for the introduction of such words in those days; and others have considered it doubtful whether the words had a Greek origin at all. Some scholars maintain that the terms generally used and the languages and style of the Book altogether are just what we might have expected they would be in Daniel's time. It may be noted, however, that there is no statement therein that the historical parts were written by Daniel; its predictions only claim to come from him. Therefore I do not see why it should be made an article of faith, that the whole Book was written by that Prophet.*

* The above remarks about the *Book of Daniel* may seem rather superfluous now, for I observe by a highly interesting review in the *Guardian* of 28th December, 1864, that the learned Dr. Pusey, Mr. W. R. A. Boyle, the Rev. J. M. Fuller, and the Dean of Ripon have all very recently issued publications on the subject. But as having been written before any of those works appeared, or at least before I ever heard of their existence, my observations, however comparatively inadequate, may perhaps remain, as recording a perfectly distinct testimony and independent conclusion. I must add, however, a notice of the remarkable discovery within the last few years of ancient clay cylinders, completely corroborating the correctness of Daniel with respect to the name of Belshazzar the King. Objectors had stated that the "last King of Babylon had a false name in Daniel." It is now proved that though they were right in giving the name as "Nabonidus," yet that his son Belshazzar was admitted by him to a share of the government, and it would seem that the son was left by his father in regal power at Babylon, where he was at the time of its capture, and that Nabonidus himself was taken afterwards. If we knew a little more than we do, some other Scripture difficulties might be as effectually removed.

Neither do I know why it is thought necessary to believe that the whole of the Pentateuch was written by Moses. But an absence of certainty on this point is a very different thing from an ability to credit what some men now more than insinuate, that Jeremiah, holy, conscientious, truth-loving as he was, could have possibly forged the Book of Deuteronomy, and that such a man as Samuel the upright could have invented great part of the accounts we have in Genesis, Exodus, &c., of the history of the Patriarchs and of the Israelites' delivery from Egypt. I cannot bring myself to believe that two such men could, in the most sublime, solemn and awful words, have written the most circumstantial untruths on the most important, solemn and awful matters possible. Such a thing is more hard to receive than the miracles which some modern writers find to be so incredible. But it is only playing into the hands of such men to assert obstinately that Moses was the writer of every verse in the five Books ordinarily attributed to him, or even that he was the original author of all the parts that he did contribute. In composing Genesis it is as well candidly to admit that it seems proved that he made use of various sources of information. But though his plan does not seem to have required him always to reconcile to each other the varied details he transmits, he was doubtless inspired, as I have already hinted, to present his narratives in the form most suitable for the profitable instruction of his people; and there is not one of those sacred narratives from which we may not even now derive some

lessons of eternal truth. No doubt also the writings of Moses and other holy men, and of most of the Prophets, were, soon after the return from the captivity, revised, edited (and perhaps annotated) by Ezra, or scribes equally learned and devout, till the Old Scriptures assumed their permanent form. Is it to be wondered at, then, if persons brought up in the criticising habits of the present day, and fancying that they ought to find in each book the unique work of a certain specified author, should meet with some things which clash with their well-regulated ideas of what a properly written book of a certain date ought to be? Can we be surprised if they occasionally meet with things hard to be understood? But it is the part of enlightened wisdom not to be offended because it has pleased God that heavenly treasures should be stored for us in earthen vessels. We should not be astonished at finding a few difficulties in the Book which has passed under so many human hands during so many dark and troublous ages. Let us receive with gratitude the Divine teaching which may be gathered from every part of it, and beware lest we be led away by unlearned instability to wrest the Scriptures to our own destruction.

VIII.

THOUGHTS ON THE GOODNESS OF GOD.

“THE Lord is good,” said more than one of the holy men of old, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. “How great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty!”* exclaimed the priest-prophet who left the luxurious City of Babylon for the land of his fathers, and foretold to the rebuilders of its ancient capital that the Lord should return to Zion and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. And every right-minded person to the present day hopes for the speedy coming of the time when the prediction in “David’s Psalm of Praise”† shall be accomplished, and men shall not only “speak of the might of God’s terrible acts,” but shall also “abundantly utter the memory of His great goodness.”

It may not perhaps be altogether unprofitable to ask, What do we see of this goodness? In what ways has it become manifest to us?

The subject has been a grateful one to many; and very attractive are the illustrations that some eloquent preachers and writers delight to put forward upon it.

* Zech. ix. 17.

† Ps. cxlv.

Thus, "what proofs," they are apt to tell us, "we may gather of the goodness of Our Heavenly Father whilst considering His wonderful works in creation ! Even by superficial observation, objects, arrangements and contrivances without number may be discovered, manifestly designed for imparting pleasure and comfort to man. But by closely examining the organisation of that sentient form which has been called the noblest work of God, every one must be profoundly impressed with the marvellously benevolent skill displayed throughout its structure. And the goodness and wisdom are equally apparent which place at man's disposal the means for the supply of his bodily wants and gratification of his mental faculties, and for the exercise of those powers which enable him to bring all natural objects into subjection, more or less, beneath his feet. Each sense is an appointed conveyance of enjoyment. But how often more than one of his senses act simultaneously and harmoniously together, and contribute varied combinations of pleasure to him. They are also channels for innumerable delights to the mind. A man has merely to open his eyes, and, behold ! the external beauties of creation are spread in unconcealed richness before him. But if he pursues his researches, nature will respond to his minutest inquiries and reveal to his most laborious scrutiny perfections of form and of mechanism which are hidden altogether from an ordinary observer. And man possesses the noble capacity not only of deriving pleasure and exacting service from the flower and herb at his feet, from the

mineral riches stored beneath them, and from the animal tamed by his hand, but also from those grand and resplendent objects which declare the glory of God in the heavens. Had the sun been solely created to give him light and heat—and how much is comprehended in those two words—it could not have answered these great purposes better than it does; but it seems also made, together with the other great light in the firmament of the heaven, for the very purpose of dividing the day from the night and for providing man with signs to mark out his seasons, his days, his months, and his years. And those stars at immeasurable distance, apparently quite disconnected with our solar system, even they are now made in some way subservient to man's ordinary requirements. Pleiades and Arcturus and Orion and all the host of heaven are not only the objects of wondrous contemplation to us, as they were to the companions of the Patriarch Job, but they appear now as enlightening friends to assist in guiding us securely across the ocean, over which, pathless though it be, God has thus provided his unerring beacons. Or if we leave thinking of ourselves and our own requirements, and look into the conditions of the lower existences—mere animal nature—what endless examples of goodness and benevolence we may see everywhere. How abundantly happy, for instance, is the lamb which frolics by the side of its mother who is sedately feeding, content with the conscious joy of maternity! And if any living thing can feel thoroughly content, is it not that delightfully

occupied creature the bee, which goes abroad only to visit the sweetest flowers, and returns home to treasure up her acquisitions in stores provided for their bestowal by her own most ingenious and useful industry? And what can the artless notes of the birds be but songs of pleasure? What happy vivacity is displayed by their active and beautifully designed forms as they dart about to collect the materials of a home for their expected broods! How much pleasurable contrivance must be exercised in the construction of the nest! The complications of its make are only less wonderful than the mathematically formed cells of the honeycomb. With what beneficent foresight the figures and powers of animals and fishes are adapted for the parts which the great scheme of nature has assigned to them. To every species is furnished the means of procuring in due season the meat which their particular organisation requires. By what a kind provision some have even the power of braving the rigours of winter by appropriate change in the colour and warmth of their natural clothing! But we might go on thus till we have spoken of almost every created thing; for we can scarcely open a page in any book of natural history without lighting on some fact which may serve to prove that **THE LORD IS GOOD.**"

Something very like this may often be heard from the pulpit, or read in good books. And what shall we say to it all? Shall we be so blind, so sour, so thankless, as not to rejoice in such manifestations of the Divine Goodness? Let us rather take up the words

of the Psalmist, who, after a review of the displays of God's honour and greatness in the works of nature, exclaims: "My meditation of Him shall be sweet. I will be glad in the Lord!" Let us never cease to feel how "joyful and pleasant a thing it is to be thankful."

But after all, are things like these the foundations on which men should be taught to build their belief in God's goodness? Is there not indeed great danger in relying upon such proofs? This is the question which I am now anxious to examine.

For when we have said all that goes before or even much more in a similar strain, we could hardly be surprised to find that we had called up an objector who might logically reply, "True, the body and mind of man are all that you have described. Their admirable powers and means of enjoyment cannot be overrated. And at least all that has been said of the brute creation, of the marvels it exhibits, must be fully admitted. And we will pass by the frequent sufferings and occasional tortures which their bondage to man brings on some animals, and the pains which others have to endure from hunger and exposure and the cruel attacks of the predatory kinds; though much might be said of the agonies as well as of the enjoyments of the inferior creatures. But as for man! alas for his state in this world! How do instruments of pain abound for him! We have as yet only heard of his advantages, but it will be only fair to examine the matter on both sides; and if we are to rely on such proofs as you have brought forward of God's goodness, how can we blame

those who think they may prove the contrary by giving a list of some of man's unavoidable miseries? So perplexing, indeed so confounding, seem the troubles, the pains, the wretchedness, widely prevailing amongst mortals, that we sometimes feel more shocked than astonished by the degrading mistake of those barbarous and benighted nations who allow to the Deity the attributes of power, but deny those of benevolence; who invest the Ruler of Heaven with the tokens of strong malignity rather than with those of loving kindness to all created things. The uninstructed heathen who watches the sufferings of his offspring in infancy; who remembers something of the wants and troubles of his own childhood; who feels the privations and pains, the disappointments and mortifications to which he is subject in manhood; who knows that he may at any moment have to submit to the ferocious cruelties of bloodthirsty enemies or to the merciless treatment of his equally savage chief; who witnesses the desolations following the pestilence, the wild destructions of the storm, and the drought of the vertical sun; who looks forward to the helplessness of old age, and the agony of the struggle with the last unavoidable foe, and thinks with the Temanite of old that man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward; such an one who knows no Gospel through which life and immortality are brought to light, is perhaps to be more pitied than blamed for his horrid error of sacrificing to the Evil Spirit instead of feeling after the Good God. And if indeed modern science is constantly revealing new discoveries of elaborate

organisation, and illustrating more and more the truth •that man's body is *wonderfully* made, it no less impresses us with the solemn warning that man is also *fearfully* made; for there is not one of the intricate and innumerable contrivances in the structure of the human frame that is not every moment liable to be disarranged. Their very number but too truly indicates the long catalogue of painful disorders to which the body is subject. And that mind, too, which is most open to the enjoyment of refined pleasures, is most exposed to suffering and anguish. And with regard to man's relations with the animal world, though he is in some sense the master of it, and the forms of the willing horse and the patient ox seem moulded expressly for his service, it cannot be denied that there exist noxious creatures also, which can only be regarded as man's perpetual enemies. By how matchless a contrivance is the venomous snake enabled to lodge his poison in the human veins! And as to those enjoyments which are calculated to afford to man the highest pleasure and delight, is it not the fact that great numbers of them are quite inaccessible to a very large portion of mankind, and that the exclusion from them produces a longing which is often in itself an almost intolerable pain? Many, indeed, of our fellow-creatures, for no particular or immediate faults of their own, are deprived of the most innocent pleasures; and perhaps still greater multitudes are strongly exercised with the craving for enjoyments which they might indulge in were it not wrong to do so, and are therefore tempted

to ask, What kind of goodness is that which imparts desires and then forbids their gratification? There is an apparent anomaly, too, in the pious forms of thankfulness expressed, according to custom, on various occasions. Providential mercy is highly extolled perhaps when one or two men are saved from a wreck which has proved fatal to some scores of their comrades; or when a person escapes with a broken limb only from an accident which might have cost him his life. But in such cases it is difficult to know what to say to a caviller who asks if it would not have been a more unequivocal illustration of goodness if the disaster had been prevented altogether?"

I have only indicated a course which an objector might pursue to almost any extent, and some minds will be uneasy till they can decide whether such objections as those we have glanced at are well founded or not. For myself, I think they are only fatal to one particular *mode* of illustrating God's goodness, but that against the fact or doctrine of that goodness they are not of the least avail. Can, then, any other method be found of proving this Divine attribute? I believe it can, and that all men may be convinced of it who will honestly study the Revelation God has made of Himself in the history and words of His Son. I believe that by means of the Christian system God does make all his goodness to pass before us, and that there is no other means at this time of satisfactorily showing it. The common illustrations of it, often so eloquently urged, are perfectly fallacious as applied to man in his

present state, appropriate as they might have been when man needed them not, when, not as yet debarred access to the Tree of Life, he could gaze on each object in the "wide landscape"

"Of Paradise and Eden's happy plains,"

and with no prompting say :

"These are thy glorious works, Parent of Good ;
Almighty ! Thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair—Thyself how wond'rous then !
Unspeakable ! who sitt'st above these heavens,
To us invisible, or dimly seen
In these thy lowest works ; yet these declare
Thy GOODNESS beyond thought, and power divine."

But now that harmony is interrupted and man is disobedient, I fear such arguments will be open to cavil until the long-looked-for new heavens and new earth are here, wherein dwelleth righteousness. For at present it is evident that things go wrong. Good things are often quite wasted, and it distresses us to see it so. Worse still, what seems to have been made for good often becomes a positive hurt to us. The fruit of a patient course of virtuous labour is plucked by the worthless swindler and stolen from the honest man who had so long been calculating on its enjoyment at the very moment it becomes ripe. We cannot disbelieve the doctrine of the Fall, however some advanced minds of the present day may try to make us. Though it is very difficult, probably impossible, in this stage of our being to understand the strange particulars related in the third chapter of Genesis—though we may not quite comprehend the language employed by the writers of

the most ancient books in the world with respect to this most mysterious event—it cannot be doubted that we are told there the darkly-expressed if not enigmatical story of a woful change that happened in man's condition; or, as St. Paul puts it, how “in Adam all die.” Man has become subject to many positive evils; but what is found perhaps still more mortifying and perplexing is the fact that there are many most desirable things, in themselves perfectly innocent, which in our present state can seldom be enjoyed or even longed for without sin—that is, man has desires which are not in themselves necessarily or originally sinful, but which very often, or in many cases, it is wrong for him to indulge. Some preachers and writers may say that it is Satan and not God who has implanted such desires within men; but I can no more believe this than I can that Satan created the water that may drown us, or the atmosphere that sometimes tears the surface of the ocean with its storms. God placed such desires within us for satisfactory and useful ends, and if man's system had not become disorganised by a Fall, that harmony, doubtless, would pervade the several parts of his nature, which would prevent the flesh from lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. It is not difficult to conceive the existence of a state of things wherein, with a perfect body and a perfect mind, and living under regulations insuring to each individual the full fruits of his toil—under an order of things where the golden rule of love to one's neighbour was thoroughly and universally carried out—man might, without sin, have the due

enjoyment and satisfaction of every one of those impulses which must always have affected him even from the very first. For instance, a man has always had an appetite for food, an appetite it was necessary he should satisfy even in Paradise. But in that state we are given to believe that whenever his body required the refreshment of eating, or whenever he thought it would give him any gratification so to indulge himself, he had only to put forth his hand and take as much as he would of what he liked best.* But now, though neither by human nor divine law it can be a crime, abstractedly, for a man to eat when he is hungry, there are too often circumstances under which it does, alas! become a crime for a famishing wretch to satisfy himself. It often happens that men are on the verge of starvation in the midst of plenty and luxury; and when one of them, reduced to destitution by no particular fault, perhaps, of his own, and having nothing in the world wherewith to purchase a morsel of bread, seizes in the instinct of self-preservation some tempting food from the store of a man in possession of many superfluities, that poor man becomes *guilty* of theft. The desire he felt to appease his appetite cannot be said to be unlawful or bad in any way, and yet to gratify it he really becomes a criminal. Other instances, if needed,

* The statement that even in Paradise there was a forbidden tree, forms no valid objection to the above illustration, for I am speaking of the perfect accessibility at every moment to unfallen man of all that was good for his support and for his real pleasure. And before man could so desire a thing forbidden by God as to put forth his hand to take it, the Fall must virtually have taken place.

might be given of things that would now be offences, because contrary to all ideas of modern decorum and propriety, but we need not proceed further on this track. Enough to say that we are told that in the beginning it was not so.

I have endeavoured to show that God's goodness cannot now be satisfactorily proved by the works of nature or the elaborate mechanism of the human frame, because these things very often turn to the injury instead of to the benefit of man, and because many desirable things, accessible but to a few, cause to vastly greater numbers only the pain of longing for something out of their reach. I have also declared my belief that there is nothing remaining to us in which we can hope to discover a solution of our difficulties but that Book in which we find the inspired oracles of Revelation, and that we do see in the sacred Scriptures an adequate manifestation of the goodness of God. For the Scriptures alone reveal to us the "kindness of God towards us through Jesus Christ."* And God's gift of His Son displays His divine and perfect goodness in a way that the human mind of itself would be incapable of imagining. I mean it is an instance of goodness requiring a supernatural revelation and worthy of it. Whilst everything here below seems unsatisfactory and nothing quite answers the purpose for which it appears obviously intended, and the most astonishing effects of contrivance not only fail of their apparent end, but often do positive mischief, we can understand

* Eph. ii. 7.

nothing of the matter till we learn that the Almighty has allowed man to feel the effects, that is to say the evils, of departing from Him. Even for God's children, for those adopted again into his own family, chastisement is necessary in the present state. But if the Divine Being has decreed that suffering shall follow sin—and who will dare to say that that is an unrighteous decree?—a Divine Being stooping down to be mysteriously clothed in flesh has also Himself shared our sufferings; He has in the strictest sense shown His sympathy; and in having lived a painful and laborious life and died a cruel and accursed death, He has effectively “put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” God refused us not His own beloved Son, although He as the Captain of our salvation could only be made perfect through sufferings. God's goodness sent to our race One whose brotherhood raises the human nature into union with the Divine. For Him God loosed the pains of death that Angels might be able to show to man an empty tomb. His incorruptible human flesh did God bring again from the dust of the earth in that sacred, mysterious, and immortal resurrection-body, provided with flesh and bones, and showing to the eye and the touch what His love had submitted to for us, but endowed also with properties and powers pertaining to the invisible world, and assuring us thereby that we also shall have our spiritual bodies, and that when we see Him we shall be like Him. He who came down from above has certified that God has apportioned many mansions in his own

abode for us; and till we reach them He is our Heavenly Advocate who sends down the Comforter unto us, the Spirit who is the pledge of our eternal felicity. And even as to the things of this life, though we are warned to set our affections more on things above, yet even here we are expressly told that Our Heavenly Father careth for us, that not a hair shall fall from our heads without Him. The Christian cannot help valuing, and, as far as his human nature is concerned, desiring the good things of this life, and God often indulges him with many of them, and in all things he is allowed by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to make known his request unto God; and all things work together for his good. And when he has the enjoyment of those things which are created to be received with thanksgiving, he has greater pleasure than other men feel in the use of them, for he finds it a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord. Paul was able to glory even in tribulations; we, too, should follow after that attainment in our humble measure. And though after all there is no denying the main fact that in a dispensation in which the whole creation groaneth there are perpetual impediments to the sinless gratification of our inclinations and wishes, a constant warfare against the desires of the flesh and mind, yet even here beams forth the goodness of God who has allotted a real pleasure to the exercise of self-denial.* Without a self-righteous spirit one may find

* A specious and very common mistake, of the young especially, may here be noticed—that it must have been intended that we should gratify

true satisfaction in having been enabled to overcome an evil habit, to debar one's self of some personal enjoyment for a good object, to give up something for Christ. Who would deliberately choose, like a certain rich man, to have all his good things in this life? Who, even if he were sure of reaching heaven, would wish to confess there, "I would never put myself in the way of suffering or of losing anything for Christ when I was on earth. I, who am now redeemed by His precious blood, and am safe for ever, never had any opportunity during my mortal career of denying myself and of taking up my cross. My faith was never tried and proved. Though I have followed my Lord to this glorious place, I never was called to follow Him in His humiliation and pain. Though now I sit with Him in His Heavenly throne and partake of His marriage supper, I was never baptised with the baptism that He was baptised with, or took one drop of the cup that He drank of on earth." No, the soldier of Christ will not regret that he fought a good fight before he received his crown of righteousness. The remembrance of perils and difficulties is the very cause of the joyful feeling of satisfaction when they are overcome. May we not then suppose that God's goodness will make even the severest sufferings of his children here to become the sources of joy and praise in the state of eternal rest and security?

all our desires, otherwise Providence would not have implanted them within us. It is a main argument of this paper that though it may have been so in Paradise, and may be so hereafter, yet there are very many things existing to modify the rule in man's present state.

Again, God's goodness may be discovered in the fact that our troubles, however painful, are often the very things that cause us to look for something better than can be found here, where everything good must be transitory and uncertain, nothing quite satisfactory, and disappointment inevitable—a thing that must be endured. Shall we complain of any means that the all-wise God is pleased to take to lead us to aspire to that world where all that now perplexes will be explained, where there shall be nothing to hurt or destroy, where there shall be fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore, where the pure in heart shall see God? It may be the fashion to think that we are not in these days to judge ourselves by such standards as are offered to us in St. Paul's Epistles, yet I believe there are still Christians who would not exchange their sharpest afflictions, accompanied by the blessed hope of everlasting life, for the very highest worldly enjoyments without it. The pleasures of this life are not to be despised, they are worth something. Without them existence must be a blank or a burden to those who look forward to nothing better. Yet the true Christian is content if God so pleases to know little or nothing of them by experience; for he believes that the God of creation, who has the power to produce all good, can also neutralise all evil, that He who led the three children unhurt through the burning fiery furnace, who enabled His disciple to walk on the raging sea, who preserved His Apostle from the deadly consequences of the venomous serpent's bite, and who in innumerable ways has shown His Almighty saving power, will yet most

signally show it in ransoming man's body from the dominion of death, and will take all sting from the sentence that followed the threatening, "Thou shalt surely die." He is certain that the Creator of man, who gave him faculties and means of enjoyment, knows how to restore him when fallen, how to make him perfect in body, soul and spirit, how to furnish him with pleasures in every way suited to the consummate organisation with which he shall be endowed.

I myself have known persons most unexpectedly and heavily smitten with reverses, persons once of considerable opulence, but so brought down that even the work of the hands was resorted to for supplying what means were required for the maintenance of honest respectability. And what am I told by a friend, who has observed them closely, of their feelings with reference to God's dealings with them? I learn that with thankful hearts these persons acknowledge the goodness of Him who by mortifying troubles and humiliations has delivered them from a state verging on spiritual forgetfulness and neglect. They gratefully submit to the loving correction which has led them to attend to the things belonging to their peace, and to taste the pleasure that springs from a habit of continually looking up to their Heavenly Father in prayer, and of trusting in His providence. Having now searched the Scriptures they think they can understand why God had contended with them, and they discover to their satisfaction that His thoughts towards them were even then thoughts of peace and not of evil!

To men without the aid of Scripture revelation, the exhibition of God's severity must appear everywhere an awful, an unexplained fact; sometimes balancing, sometimes almost outweighing the evidences of His goodness. Not so to those who really know the Scriptures. To them it serves as a warning and a memento, for it points to a certain and serious reckoning to come, and reminds them of penalties actually inflicted. The proofs of severity thus combine with those of God's goodness to keep their footsteps in the right way.

But there is one thing which those must be prepared for who thus appeal from the natural to the spiritual. When we base all we have to say about our subject on the foundation we find laid for us in the Scriptures, we may perhaps be not unreasonably asked: Are there not things noted in the Bible itself which are in striking opposition to any idea that our minds can form of Divine goodness? And we must receive the Scriptures as a whole, and look not only on those parts which seem to favour our argument, but on those also which seem to go against it. It must be confessed there are apparent difficulties. Many of them may be met by considerations already adduced, and it would be useless to go over the same ground again. But some it may be well to examine more particularly.

How, for instance, can we reconcile our ideas of the goodness of God, the mercy and grace of Him who came to seek and to save that which was lost, with such a sentence as this: "He that *believeth not* shall be

damned?" How overwhelming to many earnest Christians is the consideration of the fate of the millions of those unenlightened fellow-creatures whom they denominate "the perishing heathen!" Yet it may be some comfort to remember that those who, according to St. Mark, xvi. 16,* were to be condemned, were those who should not believe the Gospel *after it had been preached to them*, preached by the *Apostles* themselves, and confirmed by the *miraculous signs* which were vouchsafed in those early days of the Church. We know that those devoted men who now endeavour to spread the Christian religion in distant lands, and for whose success, for the sake of man's temporal and eternal interests, we earnestly pray, have no miraculous powers wherewith to prove the Divine authority of their doctrine; and few of them would, I suppose, claim possession of other spiritual gifts to the extent enjoyed by the Apostles. Perhaps their arguments are not always of a kind the most suited to convince their hearers, who no doubt sometimes honestly think they are doing God service in opposing them. And with regard to all those to whom the Gospel has not come, we may well content ourselves with what St. Paul writes in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. That the heathens are "a law unto themselves," to a great extent is evident, from the precepts of virtue and glimpses of truth touching God's everlasting being and unity, and the immortality of man,

* I am taking for granted the canonicity of the passage, vv. 9-20, of this chapter, though many learned men doubt that it was written by St. Mark.

which may be found here and there amongst many superstitions, ancient and modern. Though it is true, for instance, that the hierarchy of old Egypt suffered the common sort to worship the Godhead idolatrously under various representations of the divine attributes and workings, yet their sacred mysteries seem to have revealed, to the initiated, only One God; and it was the faith of the Egyptian that to the good, Death was but the entrance to Life. We have indeed the best authority for believing that in every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him; and it is not for us to put unscriptural limits to the efficacy of the sacrifice of the Son of God, who was pleased to call Himself the Son of Man, who died for all men.

It may be well to look in the face another difficulty which is not to be made light of. Though from the period of my earliest recollections I have held the Holy Bible in reverence, and to this day believe all Scripture given by inspiration of God to be profitable for doctrine, and to be of essential use in various ways, and though I am fully persuaded that whatsoever things were written therein aforetime were written for our learning, yet candour obliges me to admit that there are many passages of the Old Testament which, to the ideas of our modern civilisation, and I may add perhaps to our Christian feelings, are positively repulsive. Those who read the sacred history of the Jews and the writings of the Prophets throughout, must be tempted to stop sometimes and

ask, "Can this or that, so repugnant to all our notions of humanity and propriety, proceed from the God of all Goodness?"

To persons putting such a question in a spirit of humility, considerations like the following may not be wholly unsatisfactory. We must not look on everything from our own point of view. But, endeavouring to regard the comprehensive scope of God's government of the world as far as it is revealed to us, we should imagine as nearly as we can what our feelings and ideas would be if we were circumstanced as the particular people or communities were who, from time to time, primarily received the revelations of God made in the Old Testament. How different is our position from theirs! We live in an extremely dissimilar and a brighter era, which dawned four hundred years after the last of the old Prophets had predicted the rising of the Sun of Righteousness,* and the light has been gradually growing clearer ever since that Sun appeared eighteen hundred years ago with healing in his wings; though dark clouds have at times seemed to stop our progress towards the perfect day. More than twenty-two centuries thus separate us from the period when in Malachi closed the Canon of the Old Testament, and nearly eleven centuries more from the time that Moses† began it. What revolutions not only in government but in thought and in custom since! The Gospel itself seems to flourish best transplanted to a strange

* Mal. iv. 2.

† Unless Job was written before Moses' time.

soil; and the Christian of the most civilised parts of Europe must travel far Eastward and study the Arab of the Desert before he can thoroughly appreciate the patriarchal records, or picture to himself the sojourners in the goodly tents of Israel. For us God has spoken by His Son. Whether we recognise the fact or not, the Day Star has shed its light on our world, and we who walk in that light, whether we use it properly or not, must perforce see things very differently from those who groped about, with a veil between them and the reflection, feeble as it was, from the skin of Moses' face. At first, indeed, the darkness of the former dispensation comprehended not the true Light when it had begun to gleam. Even its own received it not. So great was the change, that Apostles themselves were not at once prepared to see by it, but in their old habits of looking to figures and images of the true were carried away with dissimulation. How much more difficult for us to understand *their* original feelings, than for them, men living at the transition time, to recognise the light which they actually saw at its springing up! The key to many a difficult question is furnished by the fact alluded to in the opening of the Epistle to the Hebrews, that God spoke in *divers manners* to the Fathers. In olden times David had said, "With the holy thou shalt be holy, and with a perfect man thou shalt be perfect, with the clean thou shalt be clean, and with the froward thou shalt learn frowardness." And Our Saviour once expressly told the Jews that a precept had been given them by Moses

“for the hardness of their hearts,” thereby certainly implying that it was in itself one that was not perfect ; but suited to their condition, as preventing something still worse. Indeed, of one of Our Lord’s own decisions, He Himself declared “All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.” In Ezekiel, the Scripture goes the length of representing the Word of the Lord as saying, “Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live.” When, therefore, things which our ideas and customs would lead us to consider as strange acts, when words savouring to us of harshness or impropriety, are stated to have had God for their Author, let us inquire, before we feel offended, whether they were not really well adapted to circumstances and times. Modern rulers and teachers address people in words they can understand, without stopping to inquire if they will be suitable to posterity some centuries hence. And Governments make their regulations on a similar principle—the requirements of the day. There are liberal politicians even, who admit that the Test and Corporation Act, abolished as an absurd, oppressive and unjust law not many years ago, was by no means an improper or unreasonable piece of legislation in the troublous times of the seventeenth century. Let us apply these considerations to the case before us, and figure to ourselves the state of the Israelites, to whom some rather startling commands were given at the commencement of their history, commands which if delivered to us in these days, would seem altogether

contrary to the spirit of Divine love. From the whole tenour of the Israelites' language in Egypt, and their manners in the wilderness, it is quite evident that the people under their Egyptian taskmasters, and shortly afterwards under Moses, were in general an abject and degraded race, reduced apparently by long and hard bondage to a temporary state of cowardice and mental incapacity. A powerful and rigorous tyrant was the only model they knew of for a king. Probably they supposed that every sovereign was an arbitrary and exacting ruler like Pharaoh of Egypt. Mercy and condescension would have made a prince look weak in their eyes. Debased and ignorant were then the tribes who, in the development of the Divine plans of goodness for the recovery of mankind by Jesus Christ, were destined to become the conquerors of Canaan. Such was then the people over whom the great Jehovah was to rule, the nation whose king, as Samuel afterwards said, was Jehovah their God. And how did He prove Himself to be so? "Who is Jehovah," said Pharaoh, speaking not unreasonably as their *de facto* ruler; "Who is Jehovah that I should obey His voice?" God soon answered the question by His acts, and showed that He was a King mightier than Pharaoh. The powerful Ruler of Egypt was forced, by the judgments that were executed, to ask God's Minister to interest Jehovah to stay His hand. The Israelites also "feared the Lord and His servant Moses," when after a mighty deliverance they saw the men of the terrible pursuing army dead upon the sea-shore. The King of

Israel had vanquished the King of Egypt, his horsemen, his chariots, and all his host. The Israelites obeyed Him when they had seen His great hand upon the Egyptians.

Thus in those rude times was the Majesty of the God of Israel first vindicated. But it was necessary, also, that the peculiar people themselves should acquire a character that would make them respected by the surrounding nations ; and in those ages there was probably but little respect without fear. During the whole time that God's first purpose was being accomplished, that of showing his sovereign power as God of the Hebrews, his people were passive. But in due time they had also their part to play. In Canaan they were destined to show their valour as soldiers under the "Captain of the Lord's Host." The measure of the iniquity of the Canaanites was all but full, the guilty nations were soon to be punished signally. Now if these sinful idolaters had been cut off by pestilence or famine, is it reasonable to suppose that the judgment would have been understood ? What would there have been to connect it with Jehovah, who if heard of by them at all was known only as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of Israel ? But when the Israelites themselves, fighting under the authority and the immediate directions of their Almighty King, used the exterminating sword, the nations recognised the fact that Jehovah had made Himself a great Name ; and the race whose wonderful history is fraught with importance to every people upon earth—the armies of

the living God—became the fear of the heathen round about. It was only when they heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and her king, and to Ai and her king, that the inhabitants of Canaan feared greatly, and that the mighty men of one powerful city desired the protection of the Israelites even at the cost of their own liberties. Certainly it would be revolting to the servants of God in the present day to have to slaughter the inhabitants of a heathen city, however wicked. If the blind zeal of some, who ought to know their Maker's spirit better, tempts them to wish for fire from Heaven to destroy those who will not receive Him or their representations of Him, they are rebuked now, and told that the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives but to save them. When we are astounded at what was done in old times, let us remember that the enormous civilising changes effected by Christianity have been but gradual, and that the transformation is by no means complete, but that progress is being made even now. Many things considered as mere matters of course sixty or a hundred years ago, could not be put in practice in the present day. Men have been hanged in this country for forgery and sheep-stealing, and poor starving creatures for various minor offences, since the birth of numbers of people now living ! And in the East the small estimation in which human life is still held is painfully proved by the wholesale butcheries perpetrated in the Lebanon*

* This part was written early in 1861

very recently. God's purposes of goodness to all the world were in the course of his all-wise providence to be carried out by making the descendants of his faithful Abraham a distinguished and powerful people, and it is difficult to see how this great object could be effected by other means than those actually employed. Though to modern ears the recital of the verses has a singular sound, "He slew Sihon king of the Amorites, for His mercy endureth for ever; and Og the king of Basan, for His mercy endureth for ever,"* yet the Israelites doubtless readily accepted these proofs of the truth that "The Lord is good." These very acts are elsewhere referred to as tending to make Israel respected, and they were doubtless steps in the advancement of that nation of whom in the fulness of time Christ, the Prince of Peace, should come.

There are certainly things in the Law which cause some amazement relating to slavery and divorce—regulations given by Moses, as already hinted, for the hardness of the people's hearts; but they were certainly not intended for adoption by us. We are expressly told that the Law made nothing perfect. It was but a schoolmaster to Israel to the time of Christ. Would a master exhibit goodness by treating a concourse of rough, ignorant boys with the regulations and privileges that would be proper for a community of educated and well-conducted men? But it should never be overlooked that the Law contained many most humanising precepts

* Ps. cxxxvi.

far in advance of the age in which it was promulgated. But such was the character of the Israelites that these softening influences of the Mosaic code for a long time made but little way. In the days of David cruelty seems to have been held in no particular reprobation. The atrocities, as we should call them, which he practised on the Amorites do not seem to have lowered him in the estimation of the people. And what appears to us the revolting sentiment, "Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones!" was even in the later times of the captivity incorporated into one of the most touching of the Jewish sacred songs.

In the books of prophecy we may find allusions to matters of which it pains us to read aloud; and directions very revolting to our notions were given to some of God's faithful prophets. Yet we may be relieved when we think of the customs and necessities of the East. Whilst with us, for instance, a woman shows her face with no imputation on her modesty if she otherwise be properly clothed, there are places in the East to this day where the very reverse is the rule, even to the utmost extent, and a woman cares for covering her face only. And we may read the fourth chapter of Ezekiel with less pain when we remember that the substance with which the Prophet was ultimately allowed to bake is but the ordinary fuel used in many parts of the East; the original but cancelled directions were intended to show the impracticability of obtaining even such a thing as that, during

the siege, and the extraordinary shifts and substitutions that would be resorted to in the beleaguered city for the sake of preserving life.

But still, in the Psalms and the Prophets, books composed under the Law yet precursors of the Gospel, are many bright gleams the lustre of which no time will dim. Though it is sung in them that "the Lord is known by the judgments which He executeth," "the Lord of Armies is His name," they lead us in vision to days when "the Sun of Righteousness should arise—when there should be abundance of peace as long as the moon endureth," when "swords should be beaten into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks, nation should not lift up sword against nation, neither should they learn war any more." From first to last there was a plan; let us not be discouraged in our endeavours to trace it. There were times when the Divine authority had to be vindicated, and when it was necessary to show what rigid obedience was required by God's perfections; but men were led to think of a Deliverer, to desire a Saviour who should be better than all their old judges and kings. There are remarkable proofs that one and the self-same spirit worked with the Christian Apostles and moved also the holy men of old from the earliest times that the Scriptures began to be written by them. How else, for instance, can it be accounted for that David, who however faithful a man and admirable a king in many respects, was called by God Himself "a man of blood," could have been the author of such hymns and spiritual songs as some of the

psalms which go by his name? Under what possible guidance but that of the "Eternal Spirit" could this conquering Hero, this absolute arbitrary Monarch, write as he did of the perfections of the word of God, and indite prayers and thanksgivings in language expressing the most spiritual desires, the warmest feelings, of the most experienced Christian hearts even at this day? Indeed he gives us the key himself, when he tells us, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me and His word was in my tongue."*

There was once a man, whether he were the wise King Solomon, or one who in later times wrote after his manner, who found himself deeply exercised by perplexing questions. On some of them he came to a decision, such as it was; others he seems to have left as too difficult for human wisdom to grapple with successfully; but some of these we can solve really better than he, for there are respects in which the least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than even the wise King Solomon. Yet he seems to have bid adieu to his perplexities at length with the satisfying conviction that in the main all things should be put right by an infallible Judge,† and that man though he may not understand all mysteries must find his happiness in making it his business to keep God's commandments,‡ commandments which we can read more clearly now than he could. The solemn words which come at last to give a practical value to what else would be little

* 2 Sam. xxiii. 2.

† Eccl. xii. 14.

‡ Eccl. xii. 13.

more than a string of touching and melancholy reflections on the vanity of human affairs, are well worth a place in this paper. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

The man who wrote thus had the Law, and partly, perhaps, the Prophets. We have the Law, the Prophets and the Gospel. These now together form one book which seems complete. To expect that equally in all its parts the goodness of God would stand developed according to the individual ideas of each of His fallen creatures would be simply foolish. Enough for us if we can discern, in dimness at first, any of the bright features of this goodness through the veil of Moses; and see its open face, in lustre at last, by the abundance of the revelation of the glory of Christ. Perhaps it may not be unreasonable or irreverent to judge it possible, from what has gone before, that if it were to please the Almighty to make any new spiritual revelation to the cultivated intellects of this age (though it would be the height of presumption to say that such a thing was necessary), the mercy and love which characterise the Gospel would be made much more prominent than the severer attributes which were revealed in the earlier dispensations. But we have still cause enough to recollect with humility that God's path is in the waters and that His footsteps are not known. Though His people are not now ostensibly sent to heathen nations

to "bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron," and His prophets are not now ordered to devote cities like Babylon, Tyre and Nineveh to utter destruction, but rather to represent the Almighty to the heathen as "the living God, that giveth rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness," and to proclaim the Son of God as one who "went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil," and as the crucified and the risen Saviour, the future Judge of all, yet there are still, alas! wars and desolations, even in these times, frightful enough to show the appalling evils which the unrestrained lusts of man and the malice of the wicked one may lead to. Whilst these things are permitted for a season, let us take comfort in remembering that the Spirit of God which in the beginning is represented as moving on the face of the waters, bringing order and beauty out of chaos, is the same Spirit whose fruit shall certainly in due time ripen everywhere into "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." The end may not be yet. How much still is to be endured, how much still to be done, we cannot say, nor can the angels of Heaven tell us. But let us endeavour to discern the signs of the times; and try and see whether through the red and lowering sky, distress of nations and perplexities, we can find any indication of the approach of the day when "the glory of the Lord shall be seen upon the Church, and the Gentiles shall come to its light and kings to the bright-

ness of its rising"—of the period when "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and they shall not hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain"—"the times of restitution of all things"—when "there shall be new Heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness"—when, as said the oft-desponding Jeremiah in one of his few bright moments of joyful anticipation, "They shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to THE GOODNESS OF THE LORD, for wheat and for wine, and for oil and for the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all. Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them and make them rejoice from their sorrow. And I will satiate the soul of the Priests with fatness; and MY PEOPLE SHALL BE SATISFIED WITH MY GOODNESS, SAITH THE LORD."

IX.

THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY THE ARGUMENT IN JOHN X. 34-36.

ALL Scripture inspired by God is doubtless profitable ; that is, capable of being turned to useful account by the members of the Church of Christ to the end of time. But there is a great distinction to be noticed between two different classes of texts or passages in the Bible. The lessons to be derived from those in one of them are unmistakably and obviously universal : all men can see their bearing at a glance ; they apply as immediately and personally to every individual case at the present day as they did to the Jew or the Gentile eighteen hundred years ago. But with respect to numerous passages that must be placed in another class, it can hardly be denied that so many conditions have been totally reversed since they were written, by difference of place, manners and circumstances, that it requires considerable patience, penetration and research to enable an inhabitant of modern Europe to draw any instruction from them at all. As examples of the former class may be given the texts, "Judge not that

ye be not judged;" and, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Such texts will speak for themselves, some to all sorts of men, others to all Christians, in all places, as long as the world shall last. On the other hand a passage which may be taken as a notable example of the latter class occurs in John x. 34-36.

Now what has been said of the profitableness of Scripture in general is doubtless particularly applicable to those parts of it which we call "the Gospels." I am perfectly convinced that we have reason to be thankful for the record of every circumstance and saying noted by the Evangelists, according to the good pleasure of God. All that they tell us touching Him, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, is to be prized. Yet some things in the Gospels themselves are difficult and obscure, and of these we may fail at first to discover the use. I sorrowfully confess that for a long time want of proper comprehension] gave the passage in question an appearance of unsatisfactoriness to me, and produced an impression akin even to pain. But now I trust I can *see* how its preservation should give us cause for gratitude to God.

I. To begin with a notice of that which was not pleasurable.

Judging from my own experience, I should suppose that many persons must have been seriously perplexed about the argument contained in the passage referred to. If any of the hard parts of Scripture could be

insurmountably difficult to an honest and teachable searcher for truth, I was disposed in my embarrassment to look on this as one of them. I must hope that what I have to say describing that embarrassment may not subject me to a charge of irreverence, for it was only my conviction of the Divine and perfect wisdom of Our Lord that occasioned my feelings of perplexity. Christ's religion has served more than anything else to establish amongst us a lofty standard to judge by, and I cannot help thinking that, to many a Christian mind that uses it, there is something amounting at first sight to a disquieting inconclusiveness about these verses.

The argument is respecting the Divinity of Jesus Christ. The Jews had accused Him of blasphemy, and had even taken up stones to stone Him, because that He being a man had made Himself God. Against their objections Our Lord here brings forward the plain, undeniable fact, that in the Psalms, the collection of which was included sometimes in that division of the sacred writings called by the Jews "the Law," are to be found the words "I said ye are Gods." All acquainted with Scripture would admit that the persons thus addressed by the Psalmist, or the Almighty speaking by him, were men; and that they were certainly not the most virtuous or admirable of human kind. Then Our Lord appeals to what was equal in force to an axiom among the Jews of His days, that "the Scripture cannot be broken." They could not therefore avoid admitting that certain magistrates unto

whom the word of God* came in old time were, by the Scriptures which the Jews were certain could not be broken, called Gods. And the conclusion is that it could not, after that, be blasphemy on the part of One whom the Father had sanctified and sent into the world, to call Himself the Son of God.

Now I believe I may say without intending the least irreverence, that to an assemblage of Englishmen of the present day such an argument would give not satisfaction but uneasiness. For they would ask if it were really intended to prove that there could be more Gods than one? If the possibility of that were not admitted, the whole argument would appear baseless. Or, letting that pass, they would go on to ask if Our Lord would have been satisfied with establishing his claim merely to an equality with "one of the mighty"—"one of the princes" (Ps. lxxxii. 1 & 7)? So far from that, they would say that He had claimed to be absolutely "One with the Father," or, as the Jews had complained, He "being a man had made Himself equal with God." With respect to the actual expression employed in the Psalm, we of this day should be disposed to consider, either that the language was intended to be sarcastic (for instances of sarcasm are not wanting in the sacred writings), as though a warning were given to the wicked

* The passage in Ps. lxxxii. 6, probably has reference to Ex. xxi. 6, xxii. 8, 9 & 28, the word translated *Judges* in the two former passages, and *Gods* in the last, being the same in the original. I cannot discover whether the word in Ex. xii. 12, and Num. xxxiii. 4, refers primarily to the objects of idolatrous Egyptian worship, or to the princes of Egypt, or to demons.

magistrates that however they might be Gods in their own estimation, however they might think themselves as mighty as Gods, and try to persuade their poor neighbours that they were children of the Most High, yet they should prove to be no more immortal than ordinary men, and they should fall like one of the princes, the greatest of whom had all been cut off when their time came. Or the expression might simply convey the idea of superlative or very extraordinary power.* Either of such interpretations of the Psalmist's words might be satisfactory to us, more especially perhaps the former. But supposing either of them to be correct (and there can hardly be any other), it is, to say the least, extremely difficult for *us* to see how the words used by the Psalmist can possibly be made available for establishing Our Lord's claim to Divinity. That they should appear to have been so used causes the disquietude at which I have hinted.

I trust it will not be necessary to offer any very lengthened excuse for a temporary feeling of this kind, for it cannot be inconsistent with the humble desire to

* Things of uncommon strength, or wonderful size, or beauty, were in the language of old times frequently connected and qualified with the word *God*. Thus Moses was called by Stephen *beautiful to God* (Acts vii. 20, E. V., exceeding fair). Nineveh even in its state of wickedness was called *a great city of God* (Jonah iii. 3, margin). Nimrod was styled *a mighty hunter before the Lord* (Gen. x. 9), though he was one of the children of Ham and his deeds are not generally considered to have been such as are commended in the Scriptures. Abraham is called *a prince of God* (Gen. xxiii. 6, E. V., *a mighty prince*). Rachel's wrestlings, *wrestlings of God* (Gen. xxx. 8, E. V., *great wrestlings*). Large cedars are called *cedars of God* (Ps. lxxx. 10, E. V., *goodly cedars*).

“know the things that are freely given to us of God.” There are few persons, I suppose, even among those who have the extremest views on the subject of inspiration, who in the course of their reading do not occasionally come upon a part of the Bible which causes them a degree of embarrassment. Some of them will treat the matter as a thing they do not care to trouble themselves about, and so dismiss it from their minds as soon as they can. Though they find what may not be quite in accordance with their ideas of fitness, they suppose there may be some explanation or other, and see no occasion to stop for grappling with difficulties. It is far more agreeable to pass on to places whence they can obtain more easy instruction and draw more ready comfort. And happy in many respects are such good people. Many hours of anxious disquietude are they spared, though probably they are not of all men the best qualified for contending earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. But there are others, and their numbers are now increasing, who find that they cannot take all things so quietly and easily. They are like the engineer who calculates the value of a thing from its least perfect part, and to whom it is no use to talk of the immense strength and stoutness of a beam if it has but one weak point. Scarcely more will it avail to set before these anxious minds the sublimity and perfections of the Scriptures if they find but one text which they cannot tell how to reconcile with reason, with fact, or with the general declarations and tenour of Scripture

itself in other places. Till this is done, their self-torture will continue. For I am not speaking of those who make it their sad business to find flaws in the Bible, who search the Scriptures indeed, but with the apparent object rather of discovering inconsistencies than of receiving instruction. But I refer to many with honest and good hearts who have suffered more pain than they can express, when for a moment hostile assaults have looked irresistible and the faith has seemed imperilled—who then feel that the ploughers have ploughed on their backs and made long furrows. In many of such hearts perhaps the good seed ultimately takes quite as deep a root as in those who are said “anon with joy to receive it.” There are persons who are none the less teachable because they require time and pains to assure themselves about what some parts of Scripture really do teach.

But I believe I have said enough on these points, and will pass on to considerations of which it is much more agreeable to treat.

II. For if we allow ourselves to be fairly guided by a certain principle which we should always keep in mind in our study of the Scriptures, the surprise with which at first sight we may have regarded this passage will cease; we shall be able to recognise in it a proof of Our Saviour’s wisdom; and we may even learn much from this striking example which may serve to guide us through our embarrassments when meeting with other Scriptures which present apparent difficulties.

The principle or rule I refer to, which can never be

too strongly insisted on, is this—that in the study of the Scriptures we should keep two things in view, viz., the immediate object or aim of the writer or speaker whose words we are considering; and also, as far as we are able, the condition, opinions, prejudices, and the degree of knowledge and intelligence possessed by the people who are spoken to.* The latter part of the rule is more generally important, and will serve us more particularly in the present instance.

The people addressed in this case were the Jews in the Temple of Jerusalem, men probably of the upper classes, much given to disputations. The writer of the record was St. John, who seems to have been desirous to take every opportunity of showing how his Master asserted His Divinity. And the speaker was Our blessed Saviour, who in His perfect knowledge of what was in man always used the most effectual means of convincing His audience; or, if they hardened themselves against conviction, of silencing His opponents. His opponents, as we must call them here, were a set of men brought up to admire the quibbles of the Scribes and Rabbinical teachers, who loved the letter more than the spirit, and paid tithe of mint, and anise and cummin, but

* It may perhaps be observed by any one who takes the trouble to look through this little work that I have said as much as this before, in effect, if not in as many words. But if reiteration can ever be borne with, it may on this point, which, till lately, at least, has been too much neglected. It can hardly be too frequently insisted on in these days of scrutinising objection and faithful if not always judicious defence—of attempts on the one hand to get rid of as much of the Gospel as possible, and on the other to hold the truth of God entirely unimpaired.

omitted the weightier matters of the law. We should then expect that, on the principle I have indicated, Our Lord, in discussion with them, would employ illustrations and arguments which would be appreciated by persons with their peculiarities, and which would come home to their special habits of thought and modes of disputation. It must be remembered too that they were then past arguing with, they had to be silenced, to be made to feel Our Lord's superiority even at their own weapons. Can we be surprised then if what was said was not by any means that which would have appeared a convincing argument to us? For an European of modern society differs from a Pharisee or Jewish lawyer of Our Saviour's time as essentially in habits of thought and ideas as he does in language and mode of dress, though not perhaps to so great a degree. An Englishman of these days may not be able to discover anything in the passage that would convince him, but none the less for that was it found perfectly unanswerable by the Jews in Herod's temple.

To them Our Lord seems to have said in effect, "How can you find fault with Me and say I am a blasphemer because I call myself the Son of God and make Myself equal with God? I must remind you that by the highest possible authority men have been called Gods. Persons like you, who pretend to such a punctilious reverence for every part of your Law*

* At what precise period the Masorites commenced their toilsome labours appears uncertain, but the spirit of minute and watchful observation seems to have existed in Our Lord's days, which prompted calcu-

cannot deny that in the Law it is written respecting certain men, 'I said ye are Gods.' Your belief is, however loosely you may act upon it, that not a word of your Scriptures can be broken—that every part is perfectly true, every syllable precisely correct. You must therefore, on your own principles, admit that certain men were rightly styled Gods. Then how can you say of Me, with whose actions you can find no fault, whose deeds of compassion and power are certainly more godlike than were those of the tyrants of old,—how can you say of Me, who am set apart by the Father for a certain work which none other can perform, that I blaspheme because I said I am the Son of God?" From the force of this, so unanswerable on their own principles with regard to the Scriptures, the captious Jews found no means of escaping. They only replied in a way not very unusual with persecutors whose mouths are stopped. They attempted to arrest their opponent when they could not answer his words. But Our Lord's time was not yet come for delivering Himself up; and so having effectually confounded them, He left for a place where He met with

lation of the number of times each letter of the alphabet occurred in the Hebrew Scriptures, reckonings of the middle clause in each book, of the middle letter of the Pentateuch, and of the number of times the same word was found at the beginning, middle or end of a verse. See Horne, vol. ii. chap. 2. Dr. J. Hartwell Horne himself remarks in vol. i. chap. 2, "So great was the reverence of the Jews for their sacred writings, that according to the statements of Philo and Josephus they would suffer any torments, and even death itself, rather than change a single point or iota of the Scriptures."

hearers ready to use the light that had been given them by the teachings of Christ's forerunner, John. Examining His claims in a cordial spirit, "many believed on Him there."

We need not be content, however, with simply understanding this passage; but when our first difficulties are removed and satisfaction takes the place of embarrassment, we may with reference to other parts thankfully use this striking example, so illustrative of the system adopted by Our Lord, who took the means which existed at His disposal for either instructing His hearers or silencing His adversaries in the way most convincing and effectual to them, how inappropriate soever to men situated like ourselves who were certainly not immediately addressed. And we need not confine these remarks to the teaching of Our Lord, but may apply them to the writings of the Apostles, which also occasionally present their apparent difficulties. To put my meaning clearly then, I may state in one sentence that instead of wishing to pass by the passage in question as a thing hard to be understood, I am thankful that in the course of God's providence it has been preserved, because it notably shows us how to regard other difficult parts in the New Testament,—

1. Where the reasoning may not seem *to us* to be perfectly conclusive, or,

2. Where the Old Testament Scriptures on which arguments are founded do not seem *to us* entirely applicable or even by any means appropriate, and,

3. Where instruction is conveyed or enforced in

ways in accordance with peculiar Jewish ideas, whether those ideas showed an advanced state of knowledge or quite the contrary.

One or two instances under each of these heads may be given.

1. In this particular place I must repeat that no conclusion to which I have come is in any way derogatory to the perfect grace and truth of Jesus Christ. Far from this, I am not only convinced by the general statements of Scripture of Our Lord's Divinity in which these qualities shine forth, but I find in the very things that we shall notice illustrations of that divine wisdom which always adapted the means to the end.

One example under the first head may, I think, be found in Our Lord's answer to the Pharisees about casting out demons, when He said that Satan could not cast out Satan, for then he would be divided against himself, and how then should his kingdom stand? The answer may seem to *us* inconclusive, because we might rejoin that on many occasions something might with policy be yielded for the sake of obtaining greater advantages elsewhere—that an experienced commander might abandon some posts if by so doing he might secure more important ones or injure the position of his opponent, or promote the main object of the campaign. Indeed something very much of the kind does seem to have occurred when Satan, in order to cast discredit on Our Lord, instigated demons to give him their damaging testimony by crying out, "Thou art the Christ the Son of God!" But the illustration was after

the manner of the Pharisees, who would probably have been unaffected by arguments that would have convinced us, and we must not disregard the implied and great fact that Christ's conduct and works were all opposed to the Kingdom of Evil. Another similar instance occurs in the rebuke wherein Our Lord showed that they allowed the deeds of their wicked progenitors, by building the sepulchres of the good prophets whom their fathers had slain. I do not think such words would be addressed to us in a similar case; as, for instance *we* should hardly be disposed to admit that we were personally responsible for the execution of Cranmer and Latimer at the stake because in these days we have raised the Martyrs' Memorial at Oxford. But the rebuke seems to have gone home to the consciences of the audience, and, we may conclude, was the fittest that could be found for them. Thus, also, it is difficult for *us* to see the applicability of arguments and examples met with in some parts of the Epistles to the Romans and the Hebrews, and of the Epistle of St. James. We should hardly see the force of the illustration about the strength of Abraham's faith in Rom. iv. 19, remembering as we must how the Old Testament history* relates that, many years after the

* I am not ignorant of the idea entertained by some who wish to harmonise, that Keturah was married to Abraham during Sarah's lifetime. But if this be so, it would be only another case in point to show how difficult it is to understand the Bible on the systems of interpretation to which modern Europeans are accustomed. In order to support the arguments in Rom. iv. 19, and Heb. xi. 12, according to our English ideas, there are persons who scruple not to tell us that the words in

time alluded to, the Patriarch became the father of several children. Again, as to the argument drawn from the practice of the potter, in Rom. ix. 21, we might be disposed to remark that the objects with which such an artificer deals were perfectly insensible to honour and dishonour—that a lump of clay has neither feelings of mortification or pride; whilst the alternatives of wrath and destruction on the one hand, and of honour and glory on the other, were perfectly appalling in the case of living beings of the highest organisation, prepared with capabilities for the fulness of happiness or the extremes of misery. And in Heb. ix. there is that mingling of the meanings of the word *διαθήκη*, in entire accordance, probably, with the manner of the controversialists of the time and nation of the writer of the Epistle, but causing great confusion to moderns, who look upon a *covenant* and a *testament* (or will) as very different things. There is also a distinction made in Gal. iii. 16, most difficult for us to appreciate. But all these things were doubtless good and suitable in the highest degree for the immediate purposes intended.

2. I may point out a few instances under this head where quotations from the Old Testament may not always appear to us to be perfectly appropriate with

Gen. xxv. 1, *then again Abraham took* (literally *and Abraham added and took*), do not mean “then again Abraham took,” but that at some long antecedent date Abraham had taken, “a wife and her name was *Keturah*.” The passage they say was placed out of its order with the view of preserving unbroken the continuity of a previous narrative! I am incapable of deciding the point, but if it be really so, one hardly sees how the authority of the Old Testament history can be appealed to at all.

reference to the objects in support of which they are brought forward. Thus in Rom. iii. 13, 18, St. Paul quotes various passages in which David gives a very evil character to his "enemies" and to "the wicked." The Apostle makes use of them to prove that the whole human race, that both Jews and Gentiles, are all under sin. Here *we* should find the difficulty that, according to this, David in denouncing in such strong language his wicked enemies, was denouncing not only them but himself, which *we* should hardly have thought he intended to do. Again, *we* should never have thought that Moses, when earnestly reminding his people that God's commandment was not hidden from them, and was not far off, could have been making any allusion to the first Advent and to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, though St. Paul makes his words in Deut. xxx. 11, 14, to bear that meaning in Rom. x. 5, 8. It is difficult for *us*, also, to see a proof of the sonship of Christ in 2 Sam. vii. 14, where Nathan tells David that God had said of Solomon, "I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son." For the same verse in the Old Testament goes on to say, "If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him, &c." Yet there is nothing to make it appear that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews would have expected any question to be raised by those to whom he wrote, respecting the propriety of such an application of that text (i. 5), or of the passage (i. 10) in Ps. cii., "Thou Lord in the beginning, &c.," which he quotes as addressed to Christ, though there is nothing whatever in the Old Testament that I know

of to lead us to suppose that it was so intended. It is difficult for *us*, also, to see the force of the argument in Heb. iv., where he seems to assert that there must yet be a rest, because it was a fact that David, a long time after Canaan was entered by the Israelites, had quoted the threatenings of God to the generation that left Egypt that they should "not enter into his rest." It seems very plain to us that David was speaking of those Israelites with hard hearts who were debarred from entering the rest of Canaan: and *we* cannot easily see how the mere fact of the Psalmist's alluding to this, many years after the utterance of the denunciation, *proved* that there was still, in his time, and also in the days of the New Testament writers, a rest remaining to be entered into quite distinct from that of the Promised Land. The plain words of the Psalm seem to point to the *past*, as an example and warning for God's people. The implied threatening for the future would seem to us to be that those who still hardened their hearts might be deprived of the rest which was then, that is in David's time, being enjoyed by Israel as a nation.

3. A remarkable instance of an illustration given in accordance with the peculiar ideas of the Jews, is furnished in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. And yet there are many excellent ministers who describe its highly figurative images as realities. Preachers of acknowledged ability and eminence frequently choose this passage of Scripture (Luke xvi. 19-31) for their text when they wish to delineate the state of the

departed in the unseen world. Some of them, though not all, admit that it may be a parable; that it is a picture; "but then," they remind us (and I am quoting from some admirable published sermons), "it is a picture drawn by One who had lately come from the eternity *it unfolds*, and intended by Him to shadow forth *realities* in that eternity, and *those very realities* among which hearer and preacher and every child of man must soon be mixed." It is almost painful to note such assertions. Given unquestionably with belief in their perfect truthfulness, are they not unguarded and likely to mislead? Can it be supposed for a moment that those eloquent clergymen who in their anxiety to produce a salutary impression on their hearers lay so much stress on the "great gulf fixed," can really maintain that across that gulf one of the lost whenever so inclined could be permitted to hold communication by word of mouth with the faithful Abraham, to trouble the serenity of the governor of the celestial feast, whose almost affectionate and repeated remonstrances and arguments were needed to excuse him from ordering any service to be rendered to his tormented son? Yet how they can avoid this it is difficult to see, for what right have they to draw the line and say what part of a short and well-connected passage "*unfolds realities*" and what part does not? It seems like making Scripture accord with personal impressions in a way they would severely reprimand if employed by their opponents. Taken in connection with the context, the parable of Dives and Lazarus seems to have been

delivered with the primary design of teaching the supercilious, sensual and mammon-worshipping Pharisees (vv. 14 and 18) that God is no respecter of persons, but that a poor man with no friends who could ask him to share the luxuries of their table, that a person in the enjoyment of no stately refinement to be admired by flattering retainers, that one who had literally received nothing but evil things in this life, *might* have as good a title to a place at the heavenly feast as any great and wealthy man, and that a person living in grandeur, in good society, and accustomed to the applause of the world, *might* suffer hereafter the just condemnation of God. A poor, despised and neglected man *might* have as much right to sit down at the heavenly table as that faithful man had who had been "very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold," and could lead forth "armed three hundred and eighteen trained servants born in his own house." In fine, the lesson is that a poor man *might* get to heaven, and, more than that, be amongst the most distinguished there—a thing perfectly astounding to the Pharisees, and not to be disregarded even now by us, when tempted to look with disgust not only on the habits of some classes of the poor, but too often also on the persons of the wretched themselves. Other incidental lessons are doubtless to be found in this wonderful parable; but I believe it is no more reasonable to go to it for precise revelations and particulars respecting the future state, than to go to the record of the way in which the Lord upheld before His adversaries the assertion of His

own Divinity (Jno. x. 34-36), for instruction on the doctrine of the Trinity, or the unity of the Godhead. I have dwelt so much on the parable because it seems a striking example of the way in which Our Lord, when teaching the men of His own nation, accommodated His instructions to the ideas of "the Jews," who "represented the place* of departed souls as divided into two parts, the abodes of the blessed lying contiguous to those of the wicked, and separated only by an impassable river or gulf in such sort that the ghosts could converse with one another from the opposite banks" (Kitto). When the terms used for conveying instruction are adapted to the ideas prevailing amongst those who are addressed, it is only by a grievous misconception that those very terms are represented to be the objects which the instructor sought to reveal. As for instances of the kind in the Epistles, I may content myself with remarking that it would be a serious mistake to turn to St. Jude and say that the authority of divine inspiration was pledged to the certain truth that a contest took place between Michael and Samael over the body of Moses. The real state of the case seems to be that we do rightly receive from St. Jude certain warnings and needful instructions illustrated and enforced by means of some tradition cherished by those people who would first possess the Epistle, though the writers of such tradition might be no more inspired

* Translated *hell* in Luke xvi. 23. Lazarus was there (in Hades) as well as the rich man.

than the heathen poets who were quoted by St. Paul in Acts xvii. 28 and Tit. i. 12.

I trust I have said quite enough to show that though the argument (if it is right so to style it) in John x. 34-36, is not such a one as would be addressed to us in this day, we need not be surprised that it was used to silence the Jews at Jerusalem. I have not selected that and other passages alluded to because I consider them weak points, for I feel certain now that they were the most suitable that could have been made use of for accomplishing the immediate purpose of the various speakers or writers. My object has been not to present stumbling blocks, but to remove them; and to show that if Our Lord, who was emphatically the Truth, spoke so much after the manner of the men of his time when there was a good object to be attained by his doing so, we need not suffer under doubts respecting the inspiration of the writers of other parts of the New Testament which seem strange to us, particularly of that great Apostle who became all things to all men that he might by all means save some.

It may not be amiss to note here the misleading error of taking a passage of Scripture, or a verse, or small part of one, entirely by itself, and building upon it some doctrine, or deducing some theory from it, without considering the context, and without comparing it with other parts of the Bible. If the words were taken by themselves, "By works a man is justified," or, the dead "were judged every man according to their

works," what an imperfect idea of the Christian system or plan we should get. An equally erroneous view we should derive from the bare disconnected statements respecting justification by faith, and salvation by grace through faith, not of works, lest any man should boast. But due attention to context shows the object of the sacred writers and the varied shades of meaning attached to the words they employed. And a comparison of one apparently opposing statement to another prevents our attaching *exclusive* importance to either. We should think a man very foolish who maintained that a house was built of iron, and that no timber, stone or brick was used in it, merely because he was shown a piece of ferruginous metal which undoubtedly entered into its structure. And now that the sacred canon is closed, we should use the advantage we have of being in a position from whence we may regard the Scriptures from first to last, in the grandeur of their completeness and in the fitness of their various parts to each other. So doing we shall see a work which, though executed piecemeal through many ages by human hands, has been consolidated into unity under the guidance of Him who created the heaven and the earth, who set in the sky the two great lights, and made the stars also. Long in building was the grand structure of which the Law and the Prophets, the Gospels and the Epistles, formed the lower and the higher stories, the foundation and the top stone; but the plans and directions for the whole and every part were vouchsafed, as far as was needful, by Him who "measured the waters in the

hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, who comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance." Yet even the works of creation, emphatically the works of God, came not originally from the divine hands exactly as we now see them in their completeness. They started not into life in sudden perfection. They passed through many stages, the progress of each one depending on what had been accomplished before. And as we have lately discovered that our previous ignorance of this step-by-step system had caused us to shut our eyes to pre-existing ages of preparation in the realms of matter, so we may now find that a want of due examination of the traces of advancing dawn before the Gospel light was fully apparent, has led us to think that the great light burst forth with a more sudden and overpowering lustre than was the case. Our Lord usually spoke to persons who knew something of the Old Testament history, and of the Psalms and the writings of the Prophets, and knew much of what was taught by the elders. And besides all these things, many excellent sayings of pious men may be found recorded in parts of the Apocrypha which can hardly fail to have had their effect in preparing the minds of the Jews for the Gospel of eternal life and the spirituality of Christ's religion. We have the "hope full of immortality" in the Book of Wisdom; and in the same admirable book the "breastplate of righteousness," the "helmet of true judgment," and the "shield of holiness," which

may have helped St. Paul to some beautiful and effective images. Our Lord hesitated not to expose with indignation the errors of traditions contrary to rectitude and the law of God. Yet He in His divine wisdom and the Apostles, under guidance from above, seem, in founding and raising the edifice of Christian doctrine, to have built largely, though of course by no means exclusively on what the people already knew, or, to speak more correctly perhaps, on what they had been already taught.

Such Divine wisdom and guidance also led to very *various methods* and manners of imparting instruction, though given by the same person.

What a widely different character and tone appeared in Our Lord's addresses and behaviour to the multitudes in Galilee—to His own favoured disciples—to Nicodemus, a friendly ruler of the Jews—to the cavilling Jews of Jerusalem—to the solemn Sanhedrim—and to the Roman Governor! How differently St. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians and to the Corinthians—to the Galatians and to the Colossians—to the Romans, and to his beloved Timothy and Titus! Before the men of Lycaonia, mere heathens as we should call them, he recognises the teachings of Nature. Before the Jews, who were the guardians of the Old Testament, he appeals to the teaching of the Scriptures. Before the Greeks of Athens, whom he admits, in a way, to have been very religious in their adorations, he could notice, not only without any blame for what more injudicious men might have called odious heathen

rites, but with an implied approval, an altar which in their ignorance they had erected. And instead of enforcing his arguments with a quotation from Moses, according to his custom when speaking to his own countrymen, he gives the Athenians a line from one of their own poets. A disregard of reasonable discrimination such as characterised the teaching of Our Lord and the Apostle Paul may be, indeed has been, and too probably yet will be, attended with hurtful consequences.

And something more may be observed, something beyond the mere selection of topics and arguments distinctively adapted by any great teacher to particular audiences. A lesson of no slight value may be derived from noting the very different ways of teaching the Christian faith adopted by *different writers* in the New Testament. From what different points their characteristic views of it seem to be taken! In aspects how diverse do St. James and St. Paul present it to us! How generally divergent are the tones we receive from St. John's accounts of Our Lord's ministrations and discourses, and the statements we have of them in the synoptic Gospels. So perceptible is this difference that some writers scruple not to assert that if the three first Gospels are true, then St. John's cannot be so. But far from breaking the Christian religion to pieces, this diversity may serve to show its universality, and to let us see how it asserts its mastery over minds of very various order, and triumphs over men of very different habits of thought. Minute examination may show the

domination of some perceptibly different ideas or objects even amongst Matthew and Mark and Luke, but these three may be called united and identical when compared with John. And to go further in the New Testament, the brothers James and Jude do not teach like Paul. What is prominent in one can be discovered hardly, if at all, in the others. Yet all alike are "the servants of Jesus Christ,"* all have the same Lord and through all these "diversities of operations" are guided by One Spirit. A consideration of these things may quiet much needless alarm in the present day, and should prevent some good men from being too angry about others who have the faith of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, in not precisely the same form or stage of development as they themselves have. If disciples who in a self-denying way perform great and good works follow not with us, they may be perhaps all the better fitted for promoting the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven in quarters to which we could have no access.

We cannot be wrong in carrying out to the fullest extent each of the divine lessons taught us by Our Lord, and by the various writers of the New Testament; and I cannot think that a clergyman in preaching, for instance, on the necessity of charity towards men, is bound at that time to recite all the articles of his religious creed,

* Rom. i. 1, Phil. i. 1, Jam. i. 1, Jude 1. The way in which this sacred name is still sometimes used would almost remind us of the contentions of the Corinthians, who said each one "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, *and I of Christ.*"

and to explain all his doctrinal views. There is as much of "Christ" in a sermon which teaches men to follow His example and to go about doing good, as in one which professes to give us exact particulars of the "plan" or "scheme" of salvation, or of the precise part stated by systematisers to have been taken therein by each Sacred Person of the Trinity. Still we must not let isolated expressions carry us too far. I can hardly think that an enlightened mind well established with the general doctrines of Christianity will find it wise to make too much of an individual word—a particular turn of expression—the omission or employment of the Greek article—and various other niceties which are sometimes considered of the greatest importance. Such hair-splitting is much to be deprecated. For is it likely that every writer of the Scriptures, and every speaker mentioned in them, could have thought of selecting every one of their words with minute and studied exactitude? There is abundant proof that one at least of the most energetic did not waste his time about such trifles. It is folly for us, then, to build anything on them.

But whilst we avoid this error we ought not to forego the advantages to be gathered from the most rigid criticism. Nothing must be undervalued which can aid us to understand all that the sacred writers meant; and instead of quarrelling with the investigations of science and learning, we should honour them when they show us that some of our long-cherished conventional interpretations are wrong. Those who hold the Scrip-

tures to be given by God should have confidence that the more diligently and thoroughly the manifestations of the Divine will in them are examined the more we shall be rewarded by the discovery of excellencies and beauties. The more scientifically and assiduously we employ the telescope and microscope in the examination of God's works in nature the greater marvels and treasures are disclosed and developed. Only it may be said that man has had less hand in bringing the works of nature to the state in which they are now found than he has in the long work of the construction of the Scriptures, or, if I may so put it, that fixed transcript of the revelation of God which we find in them. Be this however how it may, it seems evident that to oppose the searching, learned and critical examination of the Bible is equivalent to showing but little confidence in God's Truth. The agriculturist who wishes to maintain his position now must avail himself of all the assistance offered him by science. If a labourer in the Christian vineyard is too prejudiced to make use of similar advantages, he will not only fail to reap so rich a harvest as he might, but he will find, like an obstinate husbandman, that he is left behind and ruined rather than benefited by the progress of the universe.

We should not be discouraged by individual failures, or perhaps disasters, occasionally. We should not be surprised if presumptuous or untaught persons who do not ask for wisdom in the way St. James recommends, or even if honest explorers sometimes, if unwary, should be lost in the heights, or overwhelmed in the

depths, or dazzled by the glory of Scripture doctrine. We know that the works of God in creation were all very good, and believe that they all fulfil in their way the important and beneficial objects for which they were designed; and yet we constantly see that the incautious traveller, however fair his purpose, may be lost among the rugged passes of the mountains which God's strength hath set fast, or prostrated by the stroke of the sun which He hath set in the firmament, or drowned in the waters which He hath gathered together; but we do not cease to explore on that account, and from these very events we learn the better how to go on. And there are many things to be met with in the works of nature of which it is difficult to guess the exact utility, if indeed they are not rather examples of the profusion of creative power than of its contraction to the strict idea of utilitarianism. We admit the fact, and have no less ready perception of the Almighty power which made all things, because we cannot see how every one of them can serve any definite purpose, or be turned to any account by man. And thus also we may cease to feel too much hurt and grieved when we cannot tell how to bring every part of the Scriptures, which are due to the Divine Creative Spirit, to one precise standard of utility, or if we cannot see the use to ourselves or to anyone else of each particular verse. Yet there may have been times in which—there may be people to whom—parts have been more literally useful than we can now imagine, for we should remember that not only for our days and for our particular selves were

the Scriptures given, but also for the ages of dry formalism and unscientific obscurity—not only for men that admire simplicity but for those who are most impressed by repetitions. And, after all, there is the great truth that Scripture does serve its purpose—an object which Popery cannot accomplish, which no Church whatever and no human system can, without it—that of keeping men true to real godliness and Christianity. We can no more grow in the Christian faith or spread the Gospel of eternal life without the Bible or its influences direct or indirect, than we can support our natural life or give food to the poor and clothing to the naked without the plenteous supplies lavished on this globe by what is called the hand of nature, ill-understood and even terrible as some of her wonders may be.

It is not the part of a truth-loving student of science or nature to misrepresent the occasional perplexities he is sure to find. And whatever may be the difficulties we meet with in Scripture, it would be foolish for us disingenuously to conceal them, and so to give adversaries any ground to boast that their honesty is superior to ours.

There is still one way I have not yet noticed in which a consideration of the passage which gives occasion to this paper may be useful to those of us who are teachable attendants on public Christian instruction. It may prevent our complaining when a lesson is deduced by a clergyman, or a meaning is extracted from a text, far beyond its original import, and foreign to its

obvious signification. Even when a very extended scope is given, we need not always accuse preachers of extravagant and foolish fancy, for Our Lord's practice seems to show that there are some passages in holy writ which may legitimately be applied to several and very various uses. For can there be a question that the eighty-third Psalm was written with the object of bringing down the pride of some vain, presumptuous, violent men, who set themselves up as equal to the Gods? Yet Our Saviour uses it in quite a different sense, by making it serve to support the proofs of His own Divinity. Again, when the Lord proclaimed Himself as the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, at the burning bush, can it be supposed that Moses thought that the Almighty meant more than to encourage the future leader of his people, timid and hesitating as he was at that time, by the assurance that the God of the Israelites of his day was the same God that had led the revered fathers of their race through every trial, and had brought them to honour and success at the end? And yet Our Lord extracts from this saying a proof of the immortality of man. And is it possible that the prophet Hosea, in speaking of God's goodness to Israel, could have been thinking of Christ when he used the words which the Evangelist directly applies to the infant Saviour, "I called my Son out of Egypt?" We have already seen, too, that similar questions might be asked with respect to various Scriptures quoted by St. Paul. Such examples, therefore, seem to authorise a minister to deduce whatever lessons

he can from any part of sacred Scripture; for the well-instructed teacher of religion must bring out of his stores things new and old. Variety and life are important for his difficult work, and no resources should be closed to him. Only as he does not speak with the authority of Our Lord, nor of the Evangelists, nor of the Apostles, let him remember when he makes a text serve merely as a motto or when he uses it for the purpose of enforcing a doctrine not primarily conveyed or intended thereby, that he is bound in the first placetostate its original meaning, and to establish clearly its plain intention in the connection where it appears, so that hearers and learners may not be misled.

We have seen from many examples how full, how rich in meaning Scripture is. Not only may the great truths of the Gospel be unflinchingly maintained from its authority, but every argument and illustration suggested by the study of it may with propriety be applied to convince gainsayers according to the circumstances of the case. And by consideration of what has gone before, it is to be hoped that we who are only humble disciples and students of the Bible may learn not to be offended because here and there we meet with things that were not perhaps designed for these days of precision and system and refinement, yet were doubtless the fittest things that could have been chosen to meet the peculiarities of the people before whom they were actually put. Let us think rather of the miraculous adaptability and accumulative comprehensiveness of **THE BOOK** which

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has shown the way of salvation to Jew and Gentile, to bond and free ; which contains that which interests the child and enlightens the man of full age ; which arrests the cruel usages of barbarian hordes, leads savages to the path of eternal life, and fails not to provide for the civilised communities of modern Christendom a reason of the hope that is in them.

X.

THOUGHTS ON THE DISCIPLES' DOUBTING
AFTER OUR LORD'S RESURRECTION.*

Matt. xxviii. 17.

“ But some doubted.”

οἱ δὲ ἐδίστασαν.

DID a few or did all of the Disciples doubt? And with respect to what were they in doubt?

To consider the latter of these questions first. How strangely any mention of doubting seems to come upon us here! The three short words we are thinking of are about the last we should ever have expected to meet with where they appear. And I think that most good people who hear them or read them must experience some sort of disappointment in not finding anything added about an immediate removal of the Disciples' doubts. We can read about Thomas with a kind of satisfaction, because our first feelings of discomposure on account of his original incredulity are more than

* The above paper is an expansion of a few short observations originally sent to a periodical of Notes and Queries on Scriptural Subjects, now, unfortunately, discontinued, in consequence of the death of the gentleman who conducted it.

neutralised by the pleasure given by his honest candour and noble confession afterwards. Is it possible by an attentive examination of our present subject to remove any uneasiness that may trouble us about the doubting of these Disciples in Galilee?

Some expositors, in their desire of getting out of so incomprehensible and disheartening a difficulty as that of any of the Disciples' doubting the truth of Christ's resurrection on the occasion referred to, take the liberty of translating the verb by a pluperfect; and thus in Doddridge's paraphrase we read "Though some of the company *had doubted* at first;" but other eminent and more scrupulous commentators think this too irregular a translation to be maintained.

It appears to me that every difficulty may be removed, if this *doubting* can be understood to refer *not to the fact of Our Lord's resurrection*, but *to the position and prospects of the disciples themselves*.

I find by Greenfield's Schmidt's Greek concordance, that the verb *διωραζω* is used by no writer in the New Testament besides Matthew, and is used by him only in this passage and in chap. xiv. 31. And if Doddridge, when commenting on our present subject, had referred to his own paraphrase in the other passage, he might perhaps have taken a hint which would have spared him what he must have found the disagreeable necessity of unwarrantably substituting one tense of a verb for another. To the sinking Peter he represents Our Lord as saying, "Why didst thou doubt *of My protection?*" And Bloomfield says (in Matt. xiv.

31), "The word *διεστρας* properly signifies to stand *in vivo*, undetermined *which way to take*."

Now in endeavouring to judge how this interpretation of the verb may apply, not only, as Bloomfield and others make it do, to the case of the wavering Peter in the storm, but also to the state of the loving but timid body of disciples after Our Lord's resurrection, we may fairly suppose it possible and probable that the Apostles, in their slowness to understand, might have found very few grounds of confidence in a review of their own peculiar position. They had observed that the Elders and Pharisees were still excited and hostile. Christ's followers had all been naturally disappointed, because their Master had assumed no public authority. Though He had risen indeed, He had not even shown Himself to any one of the rulers. He had been with the disciples themselves but at rare intervals, and then, though there was the same tenderness as ever, there was an air of superhuman dignity quite incompatible with companionship and familiarity. And moreover, He was on the point of altogether leaving them; and then what were they to do? They had been furnished with no explicit instructions, they were without organisation, they would seem about to be left without a Head. They could not, indeed, have forgotten the wonderful scenes they had witnessed, and in which they themselves had been actors; but perhaps these things now seemed to them almost meaningless and valueless. There had been a remarkable page of excitement in their history which they could hardly explain, but

things seemed settling down again now to their everyday state, and some of the men of their company were accordingly resuming their ordinary occupations. But none of them could hope to be able to attend undisturbed to their old callings, after the way in which they had been distinguished for the three previous years. If they had not themselves become entirely unfit, neither friends nor enemies would leave them in peace for such things. And after all nothing could make them entirely disregard the character assumed by their Master, and the prospects of activity and dignity which He had opened up to them. But, even when most disposed to persevere in their hopes, the thought of the recent treason of Judas and the failure of Peter must have been enough constantly to harass their minds. They had every reason also to expect persecution, and had been warned, indeed, that they should be treated no better than their Lord. So theirs was not, I think, a doubt of *incredulity*. They were simply *at a loss*.* What should they do? How could they be protected? Thus Peter, when walking on the water, doubted not that he saw his Master before him, but he doubted for a moment whether he should be saved from the power of the furious winds and waves. And these disciples recognised indeed their risen Lord, but may have doubted whether they should not be overwhelmed by the things that were shortly coming to pass on the earth, and be broken by the power of their adversaries. But

* διωταζω—to doubt—be at a loss.—Liddell and Scott.

He who had stretched forth His hand to Peter at the critical moment, He who knew the thoughts of those about Him, did not long allow his apostles to remain in anxious suspense. A few words from the Divine love and wisdom of Him who knew their hearts, soon changed their distress and doubt into confidence and joy. If they feared the strength and malice of their adversaries, soon were they relieved by their Master's assuring words, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and earth." If they doubted what they themselves could do or what their office was to be, soon were they told how they should be employed, for their commission quickly followed: "Go and teach all nations." If they grieved at the approaching departure of their beloved and adored Master, and feared that they were to remain lonely and comfortless, soon were they given the promise of never-failing support and comfort and strength; soon were they assured of the constant presence of Christ Himself by the gracious words, "Lo, I am with you always, unto the end of the world." And thus were these last doubts of the disquieted but faithful eleven, like the doubts of the sinking but affectionate Peter, effectually removed.

If these views be correct, we can now perhaps apply ourselves with less dissatisfaction to the consideration of the first query, Who were they that doubted? Yet it may not be so important as it might otherwise seem to have the question decisively answered. For if the doubt was not of the painful character generally supposed, it cannot be of so much consequence to us to

decide whether those commentators are right who conclude that (in agreement with the English version) the Greek *οἱ δὲ* must, according to the usage of the Evangelists, necessarily mean "but *some*," or whether the words may not have a larger signification here, and mean "but *they*." For if the verb *ἐδιδρασαν* will bear the interpretation I venture to suggest, there is nothing in the nature of things to prevent our supposing that not only *some* but *all* of the disciples may have been exercised with disquietude and alarm, or in one word, with *doubts* respecting—not the evident fact of Our Lord's resurrection, but—the future position of themselves in the world.

XI.

THOUGHTS ON THE PERNICIOUSNESS OF
CERTAIN MISREPRESENTATIONS OF
THE HEAVENLY STATE.

CERTAIN observations I met with a few years ago in a monthly religious periodical appeared to me so questionable, that I could not refrain from forwarding a few remarks upon them to the Editor. My letter, which he was kind enough to insert in the succeeding number, was to the following effect, and the occasion of its being written will be sufficiently obvious without further introduction :

“Admiring as I do the principles maintained in your excellent publication, and the mode in which it is generally conducted, may I be allowed, nevertheless, to make a few remarks on some of the expressions employed by your Correspondent, ‘H. W.,’ in a paper in your last number, entitled, *Thoughts on the Sabbath*. We read therein—

“‘It is a fundamental error to think of Heaven as of some fine and brilliant place in which all, if indiscriminately admitted by God’s indulgence, would be happy.’
. . . . ‘It is on this day (the Sabbath) that the

streams flow down from Heaven to earth, and he who tastes them without a relish would only loathe and turn away from the fulness of the parent fountain. The truth is that he who wakes on a Sabbath morning, and rises with no other reflection than that it wants the interest of a common day, and is distinguished from the other portions of the week only by a gloomy absence of amusement; the mind which is thus insensible, if admitted to Heaven, would there pine away an irksome being, an existence without savour, an insupportable load of life, a vacuity and dreariness to whose eternal sameness and insipidity it would prefer annihilation, or in idea, at least, the restless excitement of hell itself.

“May I be permitted to ask by what parts of Scripture are these statements borne out? Are descriptions of Heaven such as these, likely to induce sinners to come and taste that the Lord is gracious? Are they not rather calculated to deter their coming to take of the water of life, and to make them think they must dislike the ways of God, which are ways of pleasantness? May not such statements—and I have often heard similar ones from the pulpit—rather prove stumbling-blocks to the youthful, the high-spirited, and the energetic? Why should such terms be employed, when even in the Old Testament we read of the ‘fulness of *joy*’ in God’s presence, of the ‘*pleasures* for evermore’ at His right hand?

“To illustrate my ideas, I may mention that once when I was in company with some lively young friends, an

observation that was made gave rise to the question from one of them, 'Why should we try to be religious? for if we do get to Heaven, we should, by the accounts that some people give of what is always going on there, soon be heartily sick of it!' In order for future occasions to be more ready with a suitable reply to such remarks, I took the first following opportunity of extracting from the New Testament all the passages I could find therein relating to the future life. It is quite needless to recapitulate them all here; but with due deference to 'H. W.,' I must think, on a review of them, that however great the pleasure experienced by a Christian in the proper observance and spiritual employments of the Lord's Day, something not only infinitely greater in measure, but also of a *different nature*, is held out to our hopes in some of the passages following, 'Rejoice and be exceeding glad for great is your reward in Heaven,' 'Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father,' 'I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord,' 'Leap for joy, for behold your reward is great in Heaven,' 'Of a truth I say unto you He will make him ruler over all He hath,' 'He shall sit down in the Kingdom of God,' 'Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just,' 'Glory, honour and immortality, eternal life,' 'The glory that shall be revealed,' 'The saints shall judge the world,' 'Raised in incorruption, in glory, in power,' 'A far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,' 'The Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, shall

change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body,' 'The reward of the inheritance,' 'We shall also reign with Him,' 'The crown of life,' 'To him will I give power over the nations,' 'To sit with Me on My throne,' 'We shall reign on the earth,' 'He that overcometh shall inherit all things,' 'They shall reign for ever and ever.'

"I am far from denying that a change of heart must be necessary for a full appreciation of the blessedness of the heavenly state; but I do say that the glorious employments and splendours of the world above, that the heavenly feast to which the faithful are invited to sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the Kingdom of God, ought not to be described as things insipid and distasteful, even to the unconverted. If I am wrong, I would in all sincerity and humility beg of you or some of your correspondents to put me right, as I am, I trust,

"ONE WHO SEEKS THE TRUTH."

To my letter the Editor appended the following observations:—

"We understood 'H. W.' to mean what some writers have expressed by the remark that 'Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.' Our present correspondent speaks of 'the unconverted,' and 'H. W.' would say that persons in this state of mind could not enjoy the blessedness of Heaven. Their heart must be changed; there must be a renewal in the spirit of their mind to make them meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. And is not this scriptural?"

Excellent as these observations are, I scarcely think they quite touch the point. For my question was not what was the favourite conventional phrase of "some writers" about Heaven, nor whether some qualifications or a certain degree of preparedness might be required of persons who should receive the blessed inheritance, but whether *certain representations made by* "H. W.," and quoted by me, were *Scriptural*: and the editor did not think fit to tell me in what part of the Bible his correspondent could have found them. And the fact is still, as at the time when I wrote, that declarations such as "H. W." indulged in are often carried a great deal too far. For God made man, spirit, soul, and body. He knows how to benefit and gratify this complex work of His, the being whom He invites to look forward to eternal felicity in the times of the restitution of all things. This state of felicity it has pleased Him to describe under the terms "feasting—ruling over cities—wearing crowns—triumphing—joining in music and praise—active service—a glorious immortality—living in splendour, honour, ease, love, order, harmony and perfect knowledge—the unrestricted exercise of feelings of gratitude infinitely due." Some of these terms may no doubt be highly figurative, whilst some are to be taken literally. But whether literal or figurative they describe a state of things which most men *as men*, whether converted or not, would extremely enjoy. Thus did it please Our Saviour—thus were the writers of the New Testament led—to *attract* men. But it seems to me too evident that some preachers and

writers of the present day make it their business to *repel* men. Why else should we be told by some whose boast it is to hold the Bible and every word of it in very especial honour, that unless we enjoy "Sabbath occupations" we should find no enjoyment in Heaven itself? Sabbath occupations, according to them, meaning principally attendance at some particular church or chapel, reading good books of a certain class, and retirement for the purposes of the study of the Scriptures, for meditation and prayer. All these things may be most desirable and excellent, and under most circumstances certainly are so. Yet I must ask what Scriptural ground any preachers have for saying that if, for instance, a healthy, young, high-spirited, sensible person, try how he may, cannot *enjoy* being shut up for a good part of the day in some particular place of worship that he may think it his duty to attend, where, perhaps, the ventilation is very defective, the singing execrable, and the discourse entirely beyond his appreciation, or if he could not *enjoy* the study of books of a certain kind, written sometimes in very questionable taste and style, he could not enjoy heaven? What right have they to say that the place and the state that God, who best knows the nature of His own creatures, has prepared for those who love Him, would be to all but a few, "irksome, without savour, insupportable vacuity, dreariness, sameness, insipidity," that "annihilation," or, "in idea at least, the restless excitement of hell itself," would be preferable?

Such statements, repulsive as they must be to all but

a very few persons, I regard as mischievous and dreadful ; and, as I have endeavoured to prove, unscriptural. My present wish has accordingly been to comment on the distorted pictures they present to us of Heaven. But it must never be thought, because I do not endeavour here to indicate the way to reach eternal happiness, that I deem of no importance the title necessary to be obtained for the glorious inheritance, and the wedding garment which must be put on by those who would not be thrust into outer darkness from the splendours of the banquet-chamber of the Great King. I have not been trying now to rectify erroneous directions about the path to Heaven ; I have, on this occasion, only expressed my sorrow that there should be derogatory accounts of the experience and employments of the saved men, whose happiness is consummated by their getting there.

XII.

THOUGHTS ON SUNDAY.

IN a populous suburban parish where I was in the habit of attending Divine Service week by week during several years of my early life, it was agreed amongst the excellent clergy at head-quarters and the various districts, about the beginning of one particular winter, that all the sermons they should deliver within the parochial limits on the first Sunday—which, as it happened, was also to be the first day—of an approaching New Year should be upon the important subject of “the Sabbath.” This resolution was adopted and carried into effect with the object of promoting the better, in the sense of the stricter, observance of the Lord’s Day. I cannot say what impression was made generally on the parishioners by the well-studied discourses, so appropriately timed, which were designed to clear up the doctrine, to enforce the requirements, and portray the privileges, of what is called the Christian Sabbath. I can only state that in my particular case the result was not such as had been contemplated. The fault may have been that of a solitary hearer rather than of the preachers; but the effect produced on my mind by

what it was my lot to listen to was rather in the way of disturbance than of establishment. I must mention that I had been brought up to consider Sunday as representing to all intents and purposes the Sabbath ordered by the Fourth Commandment to be kept holy. Up to the time referred to, I cannot remember that I had ever thought of questioning the reality of the Divine sanction by which, as my teachers had instructed me, a change of the period for Sabbatical observance was ordained, and it was transferred on occasion of our Lord's Resurrection from the last day of the week to the first. I had seen no particular reason to examine the statements of Scripture on the point. And how long I might, under ordinary circumstances, have continued to rest satisfied with the traditions of my fathers in this matter I cannot tell. But at length the issue was fairly raised. And now, after an interval of years, looking back on the circumstances, and thinking of the task allotted to the good men whom I heard, and of the principles to which they were pledged, I can hardly wonder that their arguments should not have carried quite universal conviction.

Those same preachers had been telling us Sunday after Sunday that the teaching and the declarations of Scripture were all sufficient and supreme in matters of doctrine and practice. And they certainly did seem to me successfully to appeal to the contents of the Bible as authority for the other points on which they ordinarily insisted. They were not the men to maintain

the validity of ecclesiastical sanction, and the necessity of obedience to the observances ordered by the Church, and the traditions of its early days. Their principle was to bring everything to a surer standard; their reference was always made "to the Law and to the Testimony." But on this remarkable occasion the looked-for Scripture proofs were not forthcoming, or at least what were put forward as such failed to be satisfactory to me. The preachers seemed like men willing to construct a goodly edifice for the benefit of those placed in their charge, but to be under the necessity of proceeding to work without any foundation to build upon. In other words, the leaders appeared to give an uncertain sound. Personally their exertions were energetic, yet as far as I was concerned the enterprise concluded as feebly as if in their vigorous combat they had only beaten the air. However willing I had been to take it for granted that all truly religious men were of one opinion on the subject of the Sabbath, and that its observance in the manner and on the day usually prescribed was as much a matter of duty and principle as speaking the truth and abstaining from acts of dishonesty, I soon began to wish for some surer grounds to stand on than those which my teachers had provided for me. I preferred proof to assertion; and so, after a period of consideration and uncertainty, I resorted to an expedient which, I think, must be always considered unobjectionable when honestly carried out—and it is one which I have frequently adopted when perplexed in other matters—I sat down to search the

New Testament Scriptures throughout, with reference to the point in question, and to make a list of all the passages that I could find in it thereupon.

There are persons, perhaps, who may be of opinion that I should have employed my time better in studying the history of the Church, and ascertaining on which side ecclesiastical authority lay. And I am not inclined either to despise the advantage or underrate the interest of such a course of study or inquiry. I will not stop to search out instances of the contradictory evidence that must be encountered therein on every point, either serious or trifling, and I will do no more than hint at the difficulty of deciding whether we should follow the few in early times who fasted on the Lord's Day, or those who looked on it as a season of such gladness that they would not even permit the kneeling posture of supplication throughout its joyous hours. I will found no argument on the supposition that as *an institution, civil as well as religious*, Sunday observance might perhaps never have been established but for the imperial decree of a ruler who was certainly of no puritan tendencies, the Emperor Constantine. I will bring forward none of the opinions of the great Reformers of the sixteenth century, though a statement of some of their sayings and of their Sunday habits would startle numbers of the Protestants within the United Kingdom who so justly revere those most learned and assiduous students and expounders of Scripture. Attempts to follow early customs can only lead to strange observances intolerable at the present

day ; and appeals to ecclesiastical authority are altogether unsafe for us, because they might carry us whither, as Englishmen, we would not. If ecclesiastical decrees and decisions had always been regarded as binding in England, how could we have had that which has saved us for ages from the pestiferous interference of an intriguing bigot or superstitious dupe or faithless vassal, whichever it may be, who is too often found set up in that centre of obstructiveness, the Court of Rome ? How could we have had that which, though it has cost us many things, has proved in the balance so great, so inestimable, a blessing to England—the Reformation ? If some of the great men who flourished on the Continent, or who lived here, about the beginning and middle of the sixteenth century, had not cast off the trammels of ecclesiastical authority, we might still have been under the bondage of popery and the unprogressive influence of priestly rule. The Church which styles itself Catholic, and is unhappily still the Church of the greatest part of the Christian world, has decreed and continues to decree many a thing which we Protestants cannot possibly accept. It *has* decreed the dogma of Transubstantiation, and *now* decrees that of the Virgin's Immaculate Conception. It seems to me that consistent observers of ecclesiastical authority would be bound to confess both. At the time, therefore, when I began to think about Sunday, I was disposed, as I am now, to consider that questions respecting observance of the laws under which we are placed by Divine authority—matters, in fact, involving deci-

sions as to whether a thing is *sin* or whether it is *not*—should be viewed in the light thrown upon them by the sayings and the example of the Great Prophet of our religion, and of those to whom He personally committed the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven ;* in other words, decided by the voice of the New Testament.

On the occasion referred to at the commencement of this paper, I have no doubt (though I have no particular memorandum now to consult) that the principles sought to be established were the same as are held by a large proportion of very religious and good men of the present day. I think they may in general terms be stated as follows: That the Sabbath was originally ordained in Paradise—that the Lord's Day now is the same institution as the Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment, or, in equivalent words, that it is our plain duty to observe it because the Fourth Commandment enjoined the sanctification of the Sabbath Day—that the Fourth Commandment being the basis of the requirements of the day, the rules given by that law respecting the mode of observing the Sabbath, the duty of abstaining thereon from work, and from ordinary occupations (and from pleasures), are still binding, qualified only by an exception in favour of works of necessity and of mercy. But that, as Jesus Christ is Lord even of the Sabbath, the actual Day for its observance has been by His Divine authority changed

* Including, of course, St. Paul, *vide* Acts ix., xxvi. Gal. i. 1 and 12; Tit. i. 3.

from that which we call Saturday to Sunday in consequence of Our Lord's Resurrection on the First Day of the week. That, in fine, not to observe Sunday as the Sabbath, and according to the stringent rules which are thought to be deduced from the foregoing propositions, is an actual and awful violation of God's Commandments.

I believe I have made a fair statement, and that such are the grounds usually presented to us. Indeed, I know of none other upon which a Christian can be required, first, to keep the *Sabbath* at all, and secondly, to keep it on *Sunday* in particular.

But as no satisfactory proofs of the aforesaid propositions had been brought before me, perhaps I was justified in determining to search for myself, as soon as opportunity allowed, through that collection of books which must always be for us the exponent of heavenly wisdom concerning spiritual things.

In execution then of my purpose I noted the following passages, which I transcribe as the only ones I could find in the New Testament bearing reference either to the *Sabbath* or to the *Lord's Day*.

Matt. xii. 1-8, "At that time Jesus went on the Sabbath-day through the corn, and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it they said unto Him, Behold thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath-day. But He said unto them, Have ye not read what David did when he was an hungred and they that were with him; how he entered

into the House of God and did eat the shewbread which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not read in the Law how that on the Sabbath-days the priests in the Temple profane the Sabbath and are blameless? But I say unto you that in this place is One greater than the Temple. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath-day." See also accounts of the same incident, in Mark ii. 23-28, and Luke vi. 1-5, observing the important insertion of the words in Mark ii. 27, "And He said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath."

Matt. xii. 9-13, "And He went into their synagogue; and, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked Him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-days? that they might accuse Him. And He said unto them, What man shall there be among you that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath-day, will he not lay hold on it and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep! Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days. Then said He to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth, and it was restored whole like as the other." In the account of the same incident, Mark iii. 1-5, that Evangelist relates that Our Lord asked the question "Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath-days, or to do evil, to save

life or to kill?" and it is added, "And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, He saith unto the man," &c. See also a similar statement in Luke vi. 6-10.

Matt. xxiv. 20, "Pray that your flight be not in the winter neither on the Sabbath-day."

Matt. xxviii. 1 (the account of the Resurrection of Our Lord, commencing), "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week." Also in Mark xvi. 1-2, "And when the Sabbath was past," &c. "And very early in the morning, the first day of the week they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun," &c.; and v. 9, "Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalen, &c." Also in Luke xxiii. 56, and xxiv. 1, "And they returned and prepared spices and ointment and rested the Sabbath-day according to the Commandment. Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre," &c., and v. 13, "And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus," &c. Also in John xx. 1, "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalen early," &c., and 19-23, "The same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the Disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you," &c., and 26-29, "And after eight days again His Disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus,

the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith He to Thomas," &c.

Mark i. 21, "And straightway on the Sabbath-day He entered into the Synagogue and taught." Mark vi. 2, "And when the Sabbath-day was come, He began to teach in the synagogue," &c.; see also Luke iv. 16, "And, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day, and stood up for to read," &c., and Luke iv. 31, "And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the Sabbath-days." Luke xiii. 10-16, "And He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath, and, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath-day, and said unto the people, There are six days on which men ought to work; in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath-day. The Lord then answered him, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath-day?"

Luke xiv. 1-24. "And it came to pass, as He went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees, to eat

bread on the Sabbath-day, that they watched Him. And, behold, there was a certain man before Him which had the dropsy. And Jesus answering, spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day? And they held their peace; and He took him and healed him, and let him go; and answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on a Sabbath-day? And they could not answer Him again to these things. And He put forth a parable to those that were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms, saying," &c. "And when one of them that sat at meat with Him heard these things, he said unto Him," &c.

Luke xxiii. 54. "And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on." See, also, John xix. 31.

John v. 8-10. "Jesus saith unto him" (the impotent man at Bethesda), "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked, and on the same day was the Sabbath. The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the Sabbath-day, it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed" 16-18. "Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath-day. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath,

but said, also, that God was his Father, making Himself equal with God."

John vii., 21-23. "Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work and ye all marvel. Moses, therefore, gave unto you circumcision (not because it is of Moses but of the fathers), and ye on the Sabbath-day circumsise a man. If a man on the Sabbath-day receive circumcision that the law of Moses should not be broken, are ye angry with me because I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath-day?"

John ix. 14. (Miracle of opening the eyes of the man born blind.) "And it was the Sabbath-day when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes:" and 16, "Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God because He keepeth not the Sabbath-day."

Acts i. 12. "A Sabbath-day's journey."

Acts ii. 1. (Presuming the day of Pentecost fell on a first day of the week.) "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place."

Acts xiii. 14, 15. "They came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the Synagogue on the Sabbath-day," &c. 27. "The voices of the Prophets, which are read every Sabbath-day." 44. "And the next Sabbath-day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God."

Acts xv. 21. "For Moses of old time hath them that preach him, being read in the Synagogue every Sabbath-day."

Acts xvi. 13, 14. "And on the Sabbath we went out of the city by a river side where prayer^o was wont to be made; and we sat down and spake unto the women which resorted thither. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."

Acts xvii. 2. "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath-days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures." Acts xviii. 4. "And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath." Acts xx. 7. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them," &c.

(Acts xxi. 4, and xxviii. 14? "And finding disciples, we tarried with them seven days"—"Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days.")

(Rom. xiv. 5, 6. "One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day regardeth it unto the Lord, and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it.")

1 Cor. xvi. 2. "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him."

Col. ii. 16, 17. "Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of

the new moon, or of the Sabbath-days, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ."

Heb. iv. 4. "For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day in this wise, and God did rest the seventh day from all His works."

Heb. iv. 9. "There remaineth therefore a rest (*σαββατισμὸς*) to the people of God."

Rev. i. 10. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day."

I believe there are no other texts in the New Testament bearing particularly on the subject before us. And if such be the case, I would ask any one who would take the trouble to look through the above quotations, whether there is not a remarkable absence of any injunction for the observance of the Sabbath at all; and whether there is a single passage in the New Testament authorising in the slightest degree the change of the day appointed by the Jewish Law for the observance of the Sabbath; and whether there is the least indication of the Apostles and the Church in their time, naming or keeping the First Day of the week as the Sabbath; or, if times were not ripe for that, of their wishing their successors so to do?

In the present state of the question, it may be as well with our list before us to see what we really can discover in the New Testament respecting the "First Day of the week."

Beyond all doubt we find it most positively recorded that the foremost miracle of Christianity was achieved on that day. On the First Day of the week, very early

in the morning, Christ, who was dead and had been buried, overcame death and rose triumphant from the tomb, the first fruits of them that slept. Further, we know that on that very same day He appeared at different times to individuals, and to various parties of His Disciples and followers, and that on the succeeding First Day of the week He showed Himself to His Disciples again. Next, the Day of Pentecost, in which the gift of the Holy Spirit was vouchsafed in so wonderful a manner, is understood to have fallen on a First Day of the week. Then, on an occasion that must have been several years after, we find a First Day of the week mentioned in which the Disciples at Troas met St. Paul "to break bread," and listen to his preaching. Afterwards we may notice that the expression "tarrying seven days" occurs twice in the history of St. Paul's travels, and it has been inferred from this that the Apostle waited for the recurrence of a certain day, which could have been no other than the First Day of the week. That day is also mentioned in 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Finally, in the Apocalypse, we have the remarkable expression "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day." St. John does not say indeed that this was the First Day of the week, but we know that in early ages of the Church, the terms were almost synonymous. And though some eminent critics have suggested that St. John's meaning was simply that, on the occasion he was referring to, he was under the influence of the Spirit—looking forward to the events that should attend the coming of Our Lord, contemplating, that is, in the

Spirit—the future “Day of the Lord,” yet I think the balance of evidence is quite the other way; and that we must take the expression as it is generally understood. And thus conclude the only notices or positive statements to be found in the whole Scriptures respecting the day which we call “Sunday,” and which many religious people in England style “the Sabbath.”

On a review of these few texts we may easily suppose that as that was the day selected for Our Lord's resurrection; that as Our Lord had certainly appeared on two different First Days of the week to meetings of his disciples; that as another First Day of the week (probably) had been signalised by the descent of the Holy Ghost, the gift of tongues, and the wonderful inaugural success of St. Peter's preaching; the early disciples may well have expected Christ's special presence at their succeeding First Day of the week assemblies, although no Divine instruction had been issued with respect to these weekly meetings which they would naturally hold to celebrate the joyful day of the Lord's Resurrection. And when with the quotations taken from Acts we join the text from 1 Cor. xvi. 2, we find further reason for concluding that, in the earliest times of the Church, stated meetings of the Christians took place on the Lord's Day.

And though my plan is to refer to the Scriptures alone for authority throughout this inquiry, it would be mere affectation, in too rigid an adherence to this rule, to leave unnoticed the fact that there are passages in ancient writers, as well heathen as Christian, of

unimpeachable authenticity, by which we learn beyond doubt that the early Christians were accustomed to assemble on the First Day of the week for the purposes of their religious worship, for singing hymns to Christ, &c.* What happens before our own eyes each week that we live proves that that custom has continued unbroken to the present time.

Such admissions must be made by every candid person who examines the evidence. But further than this I feel unable to go. For it must be equally admitted that there is no order, command, or even recommendation, to be found in Scripture for the religious observance of the First Day of the week. When persons authoritatively say, "*This* is sin," and "*This* is not sin," they ought to have specific Scripture rules to quote in support of their assertions. It may be a matter of necessity, then, to state as clearly as possible that the New Testament writers nowhere denounce the non-observance of that day as sin.

The Christian is not a man left for guidance to the dominion of his own feelings. Scripture never tells him that his own sense, and the perceptions with which every man is born, are sufficient expositors of what is right and wrong.† Adam soon had an injunc-

* The injunction in Heb. x. 25, not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, may partly have referred to such meetings on the Lord's Day, but it is very remarkable that no particular day is named by the inspired writer. Pliny's letter, also, to Trajan does not actually name the First Day of the week, but as it mentions that the Christians' custom was to meet together on a *stated day before it was light*, there can be no reasonable doubt what that day was.

† Where a revelation is vouchsafed.

tion given him ; Abraham and the Patriarchs received their special directions ; the Children of Israel had their Law. And Christ is not a Master who gives no Commandments ; but these may be all epitomised in one word, the imperative, Love. We are now bound to love God with all the heart, and to love our neighbour in the sense of acting towards him as we would wish that he should act towards us ; that is by unselfishly doing to him all the good in our power. Yet besides this summary, than which nothing could be more comprehensive, there are to be found directions given both by Our Lord Himself and by the Apostles for our assistance and guidance in acting upon the First and great Commandment, and in the Second which is like unto it. And I beg particular attention to the fact that some of these directions were given to Jews and some to Gentiles—to *Jews* yet under the Law, before the Mosaic ordinances were superseded by Christ's death, and to Jews who considered themselves to be still under the Law though the Christian dispensation had commenced ; to *Gentiles* who had been proselytes to the Jews' religion, and to Gentiles who had been converted directly from heathenism to the Christian faith. It is very remarkable, to say the least, that even to the Jews under the first category, Our Saviour is never said by the New Testament, in any enumeration of moral or religious duties, or even in any statement of the Commandments which should be kept, to have mentioned the observance of the Sabbath. But on the other hand, according to the Mosaic Law,

Sabbath observance was as much a definite, noticeable, outward thing, as showing honour to parents, or as murder, adultery, and bearing false witness, and yet Our Lord made not the least allusion to it when He told the rich young ruler what Commandments he was bound to keep.

It is necessary here that we should endeavour to obtain a clear perception of the laws to which Christians are really amenable. I have already remarked that whilst "Love"—Love to God and man—is THE COMMANDMENT given us by Christ, we are not without rules and instructions, and examples which may enable us to interpret this grand and simple rule, and help us in rendering our obedience to it. And I think I shall not find it very difficult to show that *we have in the New Testament exhortations enforcing every Commandment of what are called the "Two Tables," excepting only that one which orders the observance of the Sabbath.* Thus, *First Commandment*, the worship of the One God, and of Him alone, is enjoined by Christ and His Apostles in more places than I need point out, as 1 Cor. viii. 4, &c. *Second*, Idolatry is often prohibited in the New Testament. (1 Cor. vi. 9, &c.) *Third*, The duty of reverence to God's Holy Name may be learnt from the opening petition of the Lord's Prayer, as well as from other parts of the Sermon on the Mount. (Matt. v. 34, 35.) *Fifth*, The obligation of duty and respect to parents is more than once insisted on. (Matt. xv. 4-6; Eph. vi. 1-3, &c.) *Sixth*, I need hardly state the strong expressions employed

condemning murder. (1 John iii. 15, &c.) And *Seventh*, Adultery and all uncleanness. (Gal. v. 19, &c.) And *Eighth*, Falsehood. (Col. iii. 9, &c.) And *Ninth*, Covetousness (Eph. v. 3, &c.), which is frequently referred to as being against the whole principle of the Gospel. And it may be remarked in connection with this part of the subject, that though a considerable proportion of those to whom the New Testament Epistles were addressed, were doubtless Christian Jews, or had been proselytes to the Jews' religion before becoming Christians, and may have had the Septuagint in their hands or heard it read, there must have been very many Gentiles among them who could not be supposed to possess the Septuagint, or to have been instructed in Moses' law. These had been accustomed to observe no Sabbath. As to numbers of them, they could, I suppose, have known nothing about it; and yet the Apostle of the Gentiles, in writing to them, never once ordered or even recommended it, by any of his Epistles that we possess, to the Romans, the Galatians, the Corinthians, the Ephesians, the Colossians, or the Thessalonians. I do not find that he ever alluded to it in all these letters except once to the Colossians; and then, did he who said, "Lie not one to another;" "Put off blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouths;" "Children obey your parents;" "Husbands love your wives;" did he add, "Keep the Sabbath holy?" So far from that, he only mentioned the Sabbath-days to class them with ceremonial Jewish observances of meat and drink, holy

days and new moons, all shadows of things to come, which he plainly told the Colossians to allow no one to judge them about. I know that some people say that the expression here, *των σαββατων*, means "weeks," and may probably refer to the Jewish "feast of weeks," but I cannot admit such a very strained interpretation.* For if it were so, would not the Apostle have seen that the term was ambiguous, and would he not have guarded his meaning with the proviso that nothing he had said was to be taken as exempting the Colossians from the observance of the regular weekly Sabbath, if he had really thought it advisable for them to keep it? Under any hypothesis, whether writing of Jewish feasts or Sabbaths, would not St. Paul certainly have mentioned the First Day of the week in this place if he had thought it a sin not to keep it holy?

There is a passage,† as we have seen, in one of St. Paul's Epistles, where he does mention the First Day of the week; and though this text says literally nothing about any religious observances or even any meeting of Christians on that day, yet it is greatly relied on, and not without reason, for helping to prove at least that Sunday was a marked, a noted day in the early Church. It is only by placing this text side by side with two others in the Acts, that any support can be gained from it for our belief even that Christians did in the Apostle's time meet together statedly on the First Day in the week; for the words by themselves really do no more than

* And why should St. Paul have singled out this comparatively unimportant feast, and not have mentioned the Passover, &c.?

† 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

recommend each Corinthian to lay by him (*παρ ἐαυτοῦ* apparently *at home* ?) in store on that day for charitable purposes, as God had prospered him. And this recommendation but strangely helps to enforce the precepts of the supporters of modern Sabbatarian doctrines. For would they join in recommending that on each returning Sunday (the day which they term the Sabbath) every one should spend some time at home in going into a kind of profit and loss account of his worldly affairs, and when he has found the balance for the past week, should calculate a proper proportion for setting apart for distribution among the poor or for various sacred purposes? And yet such seem to be the plain directions of St. Paul, in the whole of whose writings extant there is not another word about the Lord's Day. And our object is not now to inquire *whether* the day was observed, but *how*? Was it observed as the Sabbath (we might say as *a* Sabbath) or not?

At this point it may be remarked as a very noticeable thing that there is not only the complete absence of any precept in the New Testament enjoining the keeping of the Sabbath, but that, whenever it alludes to the Sabbath, the tendency of the passage is rather to relax than to uphold its observance. We have already seen how Our Lord and St. Paul omitted mention of it when referring expressly to other Commandments of the Decalogue. We have seen the way in which the Apostle seems to release the Colossians from any obligation in respect of it. But more than this, Our Lord appears,

most remarkably for One still under the Law, to have set Himself resolutely against Sabbath strictness, and that on more than one or two occasions. Should I even be wrong in saying that for the very sake of doing so He seems to have taken the opportunity of working several of His gracious miracles on that day? He not only justified what was held to be a violation of the Sabbath law by His disciples, but He directly ordered a man to carry his bed on a Sabbath-day. Whilst He authorised leading cattle about to watering, lifting an ox or an ass from a pit, &c., on the Sabbath, He is never once said to have cautioned his audience from going too far in relaxation of the Fourth Commandment. He never extended or widened it as we read He did the Sixth and Seventh, connecting anger with the one and the longing eye and designing thought with the other. By his words in Mark ii. 28, equivalent, I think, to a statement that there was One there greater than the Sabbath, He positively claimed authority above or over it. We know how this text is used by those who say that the day has been *changed* from the seventh to the first. And in my opinion it would be very fairly so used if we could but find that the Son of Man, who was Lord of the Sabbath, *had* ever ordered the period of its observance to be changed, and *had* made it answer a purpose totally unconnected with its institution. But we are not told that He, or even those to whom He delegated authority, ever did anything of the kind. Again—the words in v. 27, “The Sabbath was made for man,” have been taken as asserting that it was made

for the perpetual and actual use of man in all places—for the whole race, the genus *homo*, and not merely for the Jews, not for the period of the Mosaic dispensation only. But the general tone of the New Testament, the way in which it everywhere else speaks when the Sabbath is noticed, and the tendency of the immediate context in this chapter, lead me to think that Our Lord's object in this place was to show us that the Jewish Sabbath, like many other strictly Jewish ordinances, was instituted by God for the benefit, and not for the oppression, of His creatures. It is easy to give illustrations of the advantage derived for mankind in general, and in all succeeding ages, from institutions that were in themselves local and temporary, given for actual observance only by a people comparatively small in number and inhabiting limited districts of the earth. Thus, no Christian will deny that blessings of the highest kind have come to man universally, through or by means of the establishment of the Jews as a distinct and peculiar people from the days of the Patriarchs who sold Joseph into Egypt till the time of the first advent of the Messiah. But to insure that distinctness and peculiarity, certain distinctive and peculiar ordinances were necessary. The great majority of those ordinances no one thinks binding on Christians now. Personally, I consider that not one of them remains binding, as I shall endeavour to show. But yet, in as far as they were subservient in accomplishing God's purposes with respect to the Jewish nation, they were for the benefit of all mankind—they *were made for*

man. Again, no part of the Mosaic law was given capriciously or arbitrarily. The peculiar rite of the patriarchal and Jewish dispensations, given by God Himself as a seal of the covenant, was instituted no doubt with benevolent purposes (whether typical or of what actual nature, I shall not stop here to inquire); it was ordered no doubt not for the pain or the oppression, but for the *good of mankind*. Yet it was only on Jews, and proselytes to their system, that it was enjoined. The Gentile Christians were altogether liberated from it, and people even of the Jewish nation were not bound to observe it after the Apostles' times.

These incidental observations lead us not unnaturally to the consideration of the Apostolic Ordinance relieving the Gentiles from the observance of the peculiar and not bloodless rite to which allusion has just been made. And continuing now the general course of our investigation at this same point, we cannot but notice the very striking fact that the Apostles and elders of Jerusalem from their seats of authority place no other burden whatever on the Gentiles but the abstaining from meats offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from fornication. If a *Sabbath* had been amongst the things to be observed by them, would not this have been the time of all others for mentioning it? or if the *day* only of observance had been changed, must not this have been the place where the fact of the alteration would have been authoritatively stated? And if we go on we shall find there is another place, where it would seem that an Apostle must have men-

tioned the Sabbath if he had held the opinions that some good men now do. St. Paul says to the Romans (xiv. 5, 6) "One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it." I am sure that a modern upholder of the Sabbath, if he had occasion to write in this way, would have added, "But there is one sacred day, the observance of which is not left to the decision of our private judgment or individual conscience; the Sabbath is ordered by the unchanging, the universally extending law of God, and must therefore be kept by all men. Other days, Saints' days and holy days, you may find it profitable to regard or not; but to break the Sabbath, to omit to observe the Lord's Day, is a positive, a soul-destroying sin." And must not St. Paul have written thus too, if he had believed or felt that it was so? But acting under inspiration he did not say a word, did not give a hint to this effect.

It may perhaps be said that out of tenderness to the circumstances of the slaves of heathen masters, and others, in the times of the Apostles, who could not possibly have observed the Sabbath, no positive command was then given. But it may be replied, first, that it can hardly be believed that God would enact any moral law which could not be universally observed; and secondly, that we can see no reason why St. Paul should not have said on this

occasion, if he had been an advocate of Sabbath observance, that when Christianity should be recognised in a country, or when facilities should be afforded in a household, it must be binding. For we are not without instances of exceptional rules and indulgences and prospective regulations even in Moses' Law; and Our Lord gave His disciples instructions respecting their behaviour towards kings, though at the moment there seemed little prospect of the homely men he addressed being brought into contact with the great ones of the earth.

I wish to base my proofs entirely on what we find in the New Testament, but incidentally I may observe that it is remarkable that in several places (Ex. xxxi. 13 and 17, Ezekiel xx. 12 and 20) God is stated to have expressly declared that the Sabbath was given by Him as a sign between Him and *the Israelites*, and that *the children of Israel* were to keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath *throughout their generations* (Ex. xxxi. 13 and 16). And does not the passage in Ezekiel carry the obvious meaning that the Sabbath was not given till the Israelites left Egypt? Indeed there is no hint in the Bible of its *observance* before that time by any man. Some persons I know attach particular importance to the word "Remember," in the Fourth Commandment. They argue that it could not have been employed save with reference to something which had existed before. I do not know why the word must necessarily be so understood, for it is used by men sometimes in giving entirely fresh instructions. We

may say, for instance, "Remember to turn to the right at such a spot—remember what I am now ordering—remember the particulars I am about to give." But if philologists decide that a prospective use of the word is impossible in that place, I need do no more than refer to Ex. xvi. 23 and 25, 26, 29, 30, where we find that the first *order* was given for observance of the Sabbath shortly *before* Sinai was reached, immediately after the departure from Egypt. Thus also Nehemiah, in referring to the events that occurred in the *Wilderness*, says expressly, "Thou *madest known unto them* thy holy Sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant." It appears from this that the word "remember" could not possibly have been intended to carry their minds back to a thing they had been *long* familiar with, and which their fathers had known for ages, but only to something that had been "made known to them just before they reached Sinai;" if it must refer to anything antecedent at all. The mention of the blessing and sanctification of the Seventh Day so early in the sacred writings as Gen. ii. 2, 3, is a fact strongly relied on. Yet it may be said that if we believe truly that the great Hebrew Lawgiver was the compiler or writer of the records of creation which we find in Genesis, nothing could be more natural than that he should have inserted there after his account of the making of the heavens and the earth in six days, a reference to the Sabbath which had been given to the Israelites, and enforced by his Law, and that words almost identical should be used.

Is it not likely, I mean, that he who wrote the history of the giving of the Law would have taken the opportunity of repeating in his account of the creation the well known appendage of the Fourth Commandment? The circumstance seems to me wholly insufficient to prove that the Sabbath was ordained and given to man when Adam was scarcely one day old.

But resuming the examination of texts from the New Testament, and coming to Heb. iv. 9, I may remark that the *σαββατισμός* there mentioned seems clearly to refer not to an earthly but to the heavenly state of rest. The *preceding* verses would lead the Hebrews to see that there was to be another rest besides or after Canaan for the people of God. The *following* verses exhort them to labour to enter into that rest, the rest that should follow their labours, as God's rest did his. I know the passage is held in some way to encourage Sabbath observance. But even if I am wrong in not understanding how it does so, it must still be remembered *to whom* the author of this Epistle was writing. He was confessedly addressing Hebrews, persons brought up rigorously to keep Moses' Law, and in the habit of observing strictly the Sabbath. Besides, the *seventh*, not the *first*, day of the week is most plainly referred to in the passage, therefore it ought not to be quoted with reference to Sunday.*

Our course of argument has led us for a time to look to some of the writings and decrees of the Apostles; but to revert now to the consideration of the practice

* See also page 333.

of Our Lord Himself, as tending systematically to the relaxation rather than to the enforcement of the strictness of Sabbath observance, I may remark that from Luke xiv. we learn that He was present at a feast given by one of the chief Pharisees on a Sabbath-day. The entertainment was on a grand scale, and the best commentators suppose it to have been one of considerable splendour. And I do not see how we can avoid the conclusion that the voluntary presence of Jesus Christ on such an occasion, shows that He did not disapprove of social gatherings accompanied with more than ordinary good cheer on the Sabbath-day, even whilst the strict Jewish Law was still in force. No doubt He acted as He ever did, by turning the occasion to good account, but we can never for a moment allow that He would do evil that good might come. He took the opportunity in the plainest manner of letting both the guests and the host know in what particulars their conduct was imperfect, and how their practice might be improved; but we read not of a word of rebuke on account of their assembling for a feast on the Sabbath-day. The incident seems to throw some degree of light on the way in which the Jews used to spend that day. It shows that the most rigid Pharisees and lawyers, who thought it wicked to perform any work, or even by a word to heal a man of the dropsy, during its hallowed hours, held that the enjoyments of conviviality, conversation, and the display of splendour, were not infractions of Sabbath law. And I read in Dean Milman's "History of the Jews," that

in the early and best days of the Jewish nation, "Rich and poor, young and old, master and slave, met before the gate of the city and indulged in innocent mirth, or in the pleasures of friendly intercourse," on the Seventh Day. In after times, the same author informs us, they were accustomed to meet thereon for the purposes of receiving religious instruction, and it is hardly necessary to explain that synagogue services were of entirely human institution at a late period of the Jewish history. The learned writer I have named gives a quotation from Philo (who was a contemporary of Our Lord), to the effect that "the great Lawgiver enacted that following the laws of nature the Sabbath should be a holiday devoted to indulgent hilarity, abstaining from all works or acts exercised for gain, giving a truce to all laborious and harassing cares. But not as many do, running mad after the theatre, the mimes and the dances, but philosophising in the highest sense." I do not pretend that these quotations prove anything more than the ideas and practice of the Jews themselves at certain periods. Rigid as they were, they do not seem to have been possessed with some of the strict modern notions of Sabbath-keeping. It may be well also to remark, that the peculiar meaning we now attach to the word "sanctification" cannot possibly be applied to many things which we are told in the Scriptures are to be sanctified or considered holy. The general sense of the words "sanctify or to make holy" is simply to "set apart" for a particular object. Thus in Nehe-

miah we read that on the great occasion when the law was read to the people by Ezra and his assistants, he and Nehemiah and the Levites taught them, saying, "This day is holy unto the Lord your God," and immediately directed them not to mourn but to "go and eat the fat and drink the sweet and send portions, for (because) the day is holy, unto Our Lord," and then it is said that "the Levites stilled the people saying, Hold your peace for the day is holy, neither be ye grieved. And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, *and to make great mirth.*" All this on the day which several times in three verses is called "holy," or "holy unto the Lord" (Neh. viii. 9-12)! I must in fairness notice the passage in Isaiah (lviii. 13, 14) which is the only one I know of in the Scriptures countenancing ascetic strictness in the observance of the weekly Sabbath. But is it certain that the prophet was speaking of an ordinary Sabbath, or of that peculiar Sabbath, the Day of Atonement, when Moses' Law commanded the people to afflict their souls?* For we must observe that the preceding parts of the chapter do treat of the proper way to *keep a fast*. But if Isaiah were really referring to an ordinary Sabbath, are we sure that the expression "not doing thine own ways nor finding thine own pleasures, nor speaking thine own words" mean more than refraining from usual occupations and habitual course of life? (See Amos viii. 5.) I offer this suggestion, not as wishing to "explain away" the meaning of any part of

* Lev. xvi. 29, 31, xxiii, 27, 32; Num. xxix. 7.

Scripture, but in the endeavour to discover its signification, not always obvious at first sight, and to reconcile one part with another, for we must not forget that the same verse directs the calling the Sabbath "a delight." After all, however, this is but a digression, our great object being to ascertain what is said by the New Testament about the day we call Sunday.

Of the practice of the Apostles with respect to the Sabbath, after the Ascension of Our Lord, we have no information except that St. Paul's "manner was" to reason with the Jews in the synagogues on that day. Several instances and proofs of this are given in the foregoing list of quotations from the New Testament, p.374. When in Philippi, also, he went one Sabbath-day "out of the city, by the river side, where prayer was wont to be made, and spake to the women who resorted thither." These must have been proselyted to the Jewish religion, though Philippi seems to have contained but few, if any, Jews ; and no regular synagogue. We may justly infer, then, that the Apostles were generally in the habit of observing the Sabbath at least to the extent of attending the synagogues. One obvious reason of their doing this was that they were sure to meet assemblies of Jews there, and the practice gave them many opportunities of reasoning out of the Scriptures and making known the doctrines of Christianity to their kinsmen according to the flesh. We have no positive proof from the Bible that they went further than this. But as the Apostles were all Jews, and had been devout and earnest men in their

religion, and as we know they did not give up all their old habits at first, if at all, it is very probable, whatever their ideas might have been ultimately about the maintenance or abrogation of the Mosaic ordinances, that they did continue personally to keep the Sabbath. On the other hand, it is evident that from the dawn of the Christian dispensation it was the custom of believers to assemble, when possible, on the First Day of the week for the purposes of worship, praise, and the breaking of bread. I must conclude, therefore, that most or all of the Apostles probably kept the Sabbath on the Seventh Day as Jews, and met with their fellow-believers on the Lord's Day as Christians. But that they confounded the one with the other I cannot find the shadow of a reason for supposing. There is no intimation whatever that they considered the Lord's Day as the Sabbath.

But leaving for a time the question respecting the identity of the days, we must endeavour to find an answer to the important inquiry, If the New Testament gives us no orders, no apostolic recommendations even, for Sabbath observance, on what authority is it that we are told it is a moral, a Christian, an universal duty to keep the Sabbath? There can be only one answer to this, viz., Because it is ordered in the Law of Moses. But as many things are ordered in the Law of Moses which no Christian observes, such as the peculiar sign of the covenant, divers washings, the feast of tabernacles, slaying beasts for sacrifices, &c., &c., things from which we are obviously and indeed authoritatively

released, why are we called on to keep one part of the Law and not another? The ready and generally accepted answer is, because there is a difference between the *ceremonial*, and the *moral*, Law given in the Wilderness; because the ceremonial Law was made to be abrogated, but the moral Law, the Decalogue, was made to be perpetual—of universal obligation. I admit at once that if this assertion can be scripturally established—if this difference can be scripturally proved—it is our clear duty to keep the Sabbath—we must abandon all kind of work and labour on the particular day indicated in the Commandment—we must keep *the Seventh Day* holy.

We are brought to this point then, that the question respecting Sabbath observance at the present time cannot be satisfactorily decided, unless we examine another. It thus becomes necessary to institute the collateral inquiry, Are we still under obligation to observe any part of the Law of Moses, or are we free from it altogether? Does the New Testament tell us that though we need not now keep certain sections of it, we are to the end of the world bound by others? To go into this fresh question may draw this paper to a much greater length than could be wished; it may be found however to have an interest of its own, and it seems plain that we cannot come to a conclusion on our main inquiry without examining one of its fundamental conditions; this we must therefore proceed to do.

We have already seen that He whom we are bound to hear, the Prophet that God raised up like unto

Moses, has not left us without Law ; and His Apostles have not left us without comments on His Law, aids to assist us in comprehending it and practically applying it. And if, whilst protesting against the doctrine that any one part of the Jewish Law survives another, I adopt for a moment for the purpose of illustration a phraseology which distinguishes between the *ceremonial* and the *moral* in the Law of Moses, I may observe that the Christian code is not without its analogy thereto even in this respect, inasmuch as *Love* may be called its *moral* law and the ordinances of *Baptism and the Holy Communion*, with all their spiritual signification and efficacy, its *ceremonial* enactments. But whether such analogy may be fanciful or not, I must maintain what repeated searchings through the New Testament seem to me indubitably to prove, that *the Christian Code*, consisting simply of the above-mentioned things, *Love and the two Sacred Ordinances*, and exemplified, explained and enforced by Our Lord and the inspired Christian writers, *is complete in itself*. I mean that *it is not a mere supplement of Moses' Law*, and that therefore a person deprived of the advantage of knowing that Law may keep the words of Christ and obtain eternal life, and that *it*, the Christian Code, *needs no supplement whatever itself*. I believe that it is all-sufficient and perfect, given in substitution for something that was introductory and imperfect. And the writings of the inspired Apostles seem to me incontestably to prove that mankind now is no more subject to the Law of Moses or any part whatever of it, than a man of full

age is to any orders from his former tutor, or a widower is to any vows of faithfulness to his deceased wife—how excellent and serviceable soever in their previous relationships these personages may have been, or how worthy soever their sayings and their character may have proved of regard and affectionate remembrance.

If there is any distinction between “the Moral Law” and “the Ceremonial Law,” it is very essential to our purpose that we should try to understand what it is. I suppose, then, it is generally taken for granted that the former includes the Ten Commandments, and that the latter comprises all the other ordinances which the Israelites were commanded to observe according to the rules recorded in various parts of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Yet I am not cognisant of any very clear definition of these limits, and I am by no means sure that those who assert the permanence of the *moral*, and the transitory authority of the *ceremonial* Law, would not wish to include in the higher category some matters besides those which are to be found in the Ten Commandments. I question, indeed, whether we might not go so far as to say that many even of the most ceremonial regulations were instituted for some purely moral purpose. On the other hand, there are probably not a few persons who think that the ordinance of the Sabbath, though ranking amongst the Ten Commandments, should be classed under the head of “Ceremonial” rather than of “Moral” Law. And greater numbers still, if they would not relegate the *whole* of the Fourth Commandment to the lower

position, would be content that *part* of it should be considered of limited and transitory obligation. It is difficult therefore to know precisely where this conventional line should be drawn. We can only fall back upon generalities, and vaguely presume that according to the popular view it lies between the Ten Commandments and the other parts of the Law. But however the matter may be settled, I must seriously ask in what places the Scriptures give us the right to say that the ceremonial part of the Law of Moses is abrogated, whilst the moral part of that Law remains in force?

The very nearest semblance I can find of such a preferential distinction, is in that expression employed by Our Lord, which is recorded in Matt. xxiii. 23, "The *weightier* matters of the Law." But as these are immediately stated by the Divine Teacher to be "judgment, mercy, and faith," it would seem that He was referring to the grand principle on which every Law from God must be founded, and that He was not alluding to any particular parts, or comparing different sets of precepts together. And His words immediately following render it evident that He was not referring to the abrogation of any part of the Law—"These things ought ye to have done and not to leave the other undone." That is, as long as the Law was in force it was their duty to go on tithing mint, and anise and cummin, as well as to guide their conduct by the grand principle that pervaded the Law—judgment, mercy, and faith. Again, the necessity of our strict attention to the moral Law of Moses or the Ten Commandments is often

strangely enforced by another saying of Our Lord, "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law and the Prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfil. Till Heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law till all be fulfilled." But it should be remembered that the Ten Commandments formed only a portion of the Law, and Our Lord's very remarkable and comprehensive expressions must embrace the whole—every minute part of the Mosaic ordinances. And it should be borne in mind that Christ not only spoke negatively, that he was *not* come to *destroy*, but also affirmatively, that He was come to *fulfil*. Must not the general meaning of His words be that the Law was to be honoured by all His disciples then, because it was in force then—that He Himself honoured it—that He came not as the enemy, but the fulfiller, of the Law. In other words, that in Him it should not be rendered nugatory; so far from that, in Him every particular connected with it was to be accomplished. He, being made under the Law, Himself fulfilled all its righteousness; and in Him and in His work for us, the typical parts of that Law, which itself made nothing perfect, were also completely fulfilled. The giving of the Law was not a futile thing. Heaven and earth should pass away rather than the least portion of it should fail of its purpose. So stood things when Our Lord spake to men belonging to that peculiar nation which was about to be scattered to the four winds of heaven, to some who were amongst the last members of that theocratic polity which was inaugurated in the midst of the thunders of

Sinai by the deposition of angels. But now, the veil of the Temple has been rent, reconciliation has been made for iniquity, everlasting righteousness has been brought in, the last High Priest has been anointed, the great sacrifice has been made and accepted, the Lamb of God has taken away the sin of the world, the law is all fulfilled; and so, now, as far as a great thing of inestimable import and significance can do so, it has all passed away. Christ is the end of the Law. To the Jews, indeed, He delivered admonitions in the days of His flesh not to despise but to observe it, for they were under it. But after His cry on the cross, "It is finished," and after His resurrection, His orders to the Apostles were to proclaim, not the law but the Gospel (Mark xvi. 15); to make disciples of all nations, teaching them to observe not what Moses, but what Christ, had commanded (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20). "And this is His Commandment," said St. John, "that we love one another." Our Lord said not to the twelve, when He breathed on them the Holy Ghost, whose soever sins Moses remits, but "whose soever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them," not whose soever sins Moses retains, but "whose soever sins ye retain they are retained." (John xx. 23). In the Book of Acts we have some records of the teaching of the Apostles both to Jews and Gentiles. As we are of the latter I need not quote for my purpose the addresses to the Jews. Suffice it to say, that they prove nothing against what I have advanced, as St. Paul, for example, in the Synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia, placed the Chris-

tian system in strong contrast with that of Moses' Law, and this to pure Jews. But to believing Gentiles everything in Acts looks but one way. How remarkable is the discussion respecting the burdens to be laid on the Gentiles! How notable the decision promulgated on that matter! Not only did the Apostles in their Decree or Epistle plainly state that they had given no directions for teaching the Gentiles that they "must be circumcised," but they say that those who told them to "keep the Law" were without their commandment to do so, and "troubled them with words subverting their souls."

If we go further on in the New Testament, and look to the Epistles of St. Paul, we may find some very clear statements respecting the Law. There are several in the Epistle to the *Romans*. It is very true that some of the Ten Commandments are referred to in Chap. ii. 21, 22, but this was to a Jew who was *resting* in the Law, and the Apostle's object was to show how his Jewish objector stultified himself by not practising what he preached to others. It is true, also, that he says (Chap. iii. 31), "Do we make void the Law through faith? God forbid! Yea, we establish the Law." But when we note the way in which St. Paul spoke of the Law in other places, I think we shall find that this passage can scarcely carry any other sense than that which we must assign to Our Lord's words in Matt. v. 17, 18. The Law could not be allowed to have been of no use. The purposes for which in the Divine dispensation it was instituted, had been per-

fectly accomplished. St. Paul establishes it in its true and honourable position. It was a necessary and good precursor of something still better than itself. For, a few chapters further (vii. and viii.), the whole argument goes to show that we are "delivered from the Law, dead to it, free from it." And these expressions, strong as they are, were employed, it must be remembered, by one who had been a most rigid Jew, whose righteousness had once consisted in legal observances; they were employed in convincing those who had also been devotees to the Law, and could scarcely be reasoned out of their old impressions and habits. Thus he speaks further on (xiii. 8, 10), showing how the Law is fulfilled, and quoting for his purpose five of the Ten Commandments. This passage is one that I have been surprised to see brought forward as evidence that St. Paul held a portion of the Law to be still in force; for in this very place he speaks of the Law as being *fulfilled*, as being rendered unnecessary by the Christian rule of Love.

The scope of St. Paul's arguments and illustrations in this Epistle, and others which must be briefly examined, cannot, I think, be candidly considered without convincing an unprejudiced mind that when he speaks of the Law of Moses it is of the entire Law, not the Law with the principal part, the Ten Commandments, the head and spirit of the whole, omitted. When we say a person is dead, we do not mean that only some of his limbs are lost or useless, and we do not say that a woman is released from her engagement

to her husband if his head and his heart be living, though parts of his body may be paralysed. So St. Paul could not have declared that the Law was dead if the weightier part of it survived. But when an honoured husband is dead, she who has acted as a good wife to him will respect his memory, will venerate his wisdom, and make much of the useful counsels he gave, though she may use her liberty of entering into a fresh engagement. The Law was holy, and the Commandment was holy, and just and good; and if the jurist or statesman of the present day finds it advantageous to make himself master of the old Roman Law, much more may the Christian find it profitable to study the Law under which the Allwise God thought it good to place his people Israel.

That Law, so majestic and pure, given at a time when the whole world was lying in ignorance, superstition and wickedness, is, to my mind, a striking instance of a revelation from the Almighty, and in its wonderful truth, as far as truth could then be received, a strong collateral proof of the inspiration of the Scriptures. The Christian will certainly observe many things enjoined in it; yet not because the Law commands them, but because, being inherently right and good, they are in accordance with the Law of love and the interpretations of that Law which are to be found in the New Testament. Thus, if I may speak in the same breath of a Divine original and an able human compendium, I may say that in many affairs of life and matters of business, an Englishman's course may be shaped in accordance

with rules laid down in the *Code Napoléon*, yet not because certain regulations are promulgated by that famous code, but because it, and the English Law, and the principles of right, in certain respects agree.

The particular danger of the *Corinthians* does not seem to have lain in the direction of overstraining the demands of the Law. Quite the reverse. St. Paul does not find it necessary to place before them the arguments we find in the Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians. Yet though the Corinthians were rather given to license than otherwise, the Law is not pressed upon them, but faith, hope, love and obedience of (subjection to) Christ. It is only in the first Epistle that the Law is at all mentioned, and then only cursorily. In the ninth chapter St. Paul makes a quotation which I shall notice when I come to consider another quotation in the Epistle to the Ephesians. But he says in same chapter, v. 20, "I became to them that are under the Law, as under the Law." That is, he, Jew though he were, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, would only in certain circumstances place himself under the Law; and then not because he was bound to do so but only as a matter of expediency and concession, in order that he might gain them that were under the Law, that he might by all means save some. If the Law alluded to in chap. xv. 56, is that of Moses, the next verse speaks of our victory over it through Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Galatians who were already in the Apostle's time turning aside to weak and beggarly elements, who were so nearly being brought into bondage, had

dangers entirely different from those of the licentious Corinthians. False brethren were leading the Galatian Church into thralldom. St. Paul had to call them back to liberty, and wrote in terms more plain and uncompromising about the Law to this bewitched community than he did even to the bigoted Jew at Rome. In his Epistle he speaks of being dead to the Law. He concedes to the Law no lasting authority, no permanent force whatever, allowing it only the fleeting prerogative of a schoolmaster, man's schoolmaster to Christ, and intimating that in that useful character its occupation was gone, as we are no more children, having now received possession of our inheritance. The Apostle expresses his fears for those members of the Galatian Church who observed* days and months and times and years. Christians, he says, are free, and should not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage. And it is important for my purpose to note that he cautions them that if they observed any part of the Law *as the Law*, they were debtors to the whole. Certainly not the least hint is given of any distinction or preference here; every part of the Law is put on the same footing. In the same chapter in which he thus warns them of the consequences of the least concession, because a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, he gives us the most ample lists of the works of the flesh and the fruits of the spirit, so that it is plain that the Christian, with

* It would be wandering from the immediate point to put such a question above, but I may be permitted in a note to ask why St. Paul does not specially exempt the Sabbath from the category in Gal. iv. 10?

these before him, need not resort to the Ten Commandments to learn what he ought and what he ought not to do—to know right from wrong—what is pleasing to his Father and his Redeemer, and what is contrary to the mind of the Spirit.

To the *Ephesians* the Apostle speaks in the most explicit terms possible of Christ's "having abolished the Law of Commandments in ordinances." He shows afterwards how a Christian should live who is growing towards the stature of a perfect man in Christ, and is a follower of God, walking in love. It is true that for once he does mention one of the Ten Commandments, the fifth (vi. 2-3). This may be explained consistently with my opinions in two ways: First. St. Paul was brought up to a very rigid observance of the Law; and it is no wonder that his old habits of referring everything to it, and judging everything by it, should occasionally come upon him again. Or, secondly, he may simply have been expressing his admonition with a most appropriate quotation of one of the Laws which God thought fit to give to the Israelites on the prospect of entering Canaan. This Law, one of the principal Commandments delivered to the Jewish people in such solemn state from Sinai, the first of the second table, was distinguished, he tells the Ephesians, by being accompanied with a promise to those to whom it was given. I think this is a sufficient explanation, for it seems really impossible that St. Paul could have considered the Ephesians bound by the Sinaitic Code; because, besides other reasons, *they* had no land in Canaan.

divinely given to them, and could not therefore be personally interested in the promise; and we have in fact no reason whatever to suppose that the promise in question holds good, even in a general way, under the Christian dispensation; for alas, the most exemplary and dutiful children enjoy no immunity from an early dart of death. And if the Apostle's quotation of a law stamps it with permanent authority, we shall have to observe other Mosaic ordinances besides the Ten Commandments. "Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn," was quoted by St. Paul from "the Law" (1 Cor. ix. 9, and see Deut. xxv.), as certainly as the Fifth Commandment was. But as no one who reads the twenty-fifth of Deuteronomy can seriously assert that Christians are bound by the very peculiar Mosaic ordinances found in that chapter, so I maintain ought no one seriously to assert that we are bound by the Ten Commandments, merely because St. Paul quoted some of them. We are gratified to find that the principles of kind and fair dealing towards animals were recognised in Moses' Law, but a Christian needs not that to make him merciful to his beast. And the proper support of those who sow unto us spiritual things (1 Cor. ix.), and proper obedience on the part of children to their parents, are Christian duties, plainly defined as such in the New Testament, but we need not go back to the so-called "ceremonial" and "moral" Law for their sanction and enforcement.

The *Philippians*, partakers of the Apostle's grace, seem to have had little need of explicit instructions or

cautions about the Law. But St. Paul could not refrain from reminding even them to "Beware of the concision," and from showing them how he counted his former blamelessness as touching the Law, and his righteousness which was of the Law and was once so great a gain to him, as only loss for Christ—how he counted it indeed but dung that he might win Christ.

The *Colossians* he tells how Christ had "blotted out the handwriting of ordinances," things which he says were "against them," and he cautions them in the remarkable passage already referred to against those who would "judge them in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days."

To the *Thessalonians* St. Paul seems to have had no occasion at all to write on these matters.

In 1 *Timothy* i. 6, 7, the apostle speaks against some who "desired to be teachers of the Law," as having "swerved from charity, good conscience and unfeigned faith, and turned aside unto vain jangling, understanding neither what they said nor whereof they affirmed." And then follows a declaration which may seem at first sight to convey even St. Paul's sanction to the authority of the Law, for he says, "But we know that the Law is good (*καλός*)," and persons may argue that what was good in the Apostle's time, when the Christian dispensation had commenced, must continue good now and to the end of time. We can hardly imagine that St. Paul could have meant as much as this about the Law of Moses, after the way in which he

had so frequently written of it. Accordingly we find he immediately qualifies the assertion by adding the proviso, "if a man use it lawfully," that is I suppose in the way in which it ought to be used by those who are under the influence of "the glorious Gospel"—if a man use it as a thing most excellent in its season, from the careful study of which the most valuable lessons may be learnt. And the verse immediately following certainly seems to intimate that Christians are sufficiently guided by what he puts in contradistinction to the Law, the "sound doctrine" of the "glorious Gospel;" the Law he left to a set of wretches whose practices, hardly nameable here, are indicated in the 9th and 10th verses. In no other part beside this passage (i. 5-10) does St. Paul refer to the Law in the first Epistle to Timothy. It is not named in the second, nor in the Epistle to *Titus* and to *Philemon*.

A principal object of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* was to contrast "the Law of a carnal commandment" with "the power of an endless life." It shows to the Sons of Israel that their "Law made nothing perfect," it was but introductory of a "better hope"—that "the first covenant not being faultless," having served its purpose, being "decayed and waxen old, was then ready to vanish away"—that it was but a "shadow of good things to come"—that the promise was now realised that "the just should live" not by the deeds of the law, but "by faith." And to show that the inspired author alluded not only to what is entitled the Ceremonial Law but also to the Ten Commandments them-

selves, it may be enough for me to quote his words, "Ye are *not* come to the Mount that might be touched and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words," &c., &c., all which particulars indicate as clearly as possible the circumstances actually attending the giving of that part of the Law called the Ten Commandments, and no other part; for where else do we read of "the voice of words" which were immediately uttered by God, being heard by the congregation.

We come now to the Epistle of *St. James*; and I shall not be so disingenuous as to ignore the fact that he does speak of the Law; of men who "commit sin and are convinced of the Law as transgressors;" that he says that the man who offends in one point is guilty of all, and mentions specifically two of the Ten Commandments. With respect to the bearing of these things on our immediate subject, I would remark first that as *St. James* manifestly includes the Ten Commandments in the Law of *Moses*, it is but reasonable to suppose that the other Sacred Writers do so also; so that when *St. Paul*, for instance, speaks of the Law being dead, he could not mean to except the Ten Commandments. Secondly, whilst we must acknowledge that *St. James's* words read as if he considered the Law still in force, we should not fail to observe that he refers also to the more comprehensive "Law of liberty," and I think that a strict examination of the scope of the passage ii. 8-13, may show his meaning to have been that there was a higher and more merciful Law than that of *Moses* which showed

only judgment without mercy to those who had showed no mercy, and that whosoever trusted in the Law must remember that the very least error was fatal, that if he broke one single Commandment he would be considered as a transgressor of the whole. As far superior to this, he exalted the "royal Law" of liberty; in which "mercy rejoiceth against judgment." But, whether this were so or not, we should be wrong not to bear in mind that the Epistle was written expressly "to the *Twelve Tribes*," to men who had been from their earliest years accustomed to look on the Law as the one precious thing that they lived for, and who could not by any observer of human nature be expected abruptly to give it up altogether. Was it not the very writer of this Epistle and the elders with him who said once to St. Paul himself, "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe, and they are *all jealous of the Law*?" Was not St. James one who urged the Apostle of the Gentiles to do something in accommodation to Jewish prejudices that might satisfy the people of Jerusalem that he "himself also walked orderly and kept the Law?" And did not the author of the Epistle to the Galatians, who told them to stand fast in Christian liberty, comply with the advice thus given him, and subject himself to an onerous rite in the vain wish to satisfy the Jews? How can we wonder indeed that the believing Jews of those times went on clinging to that which was decaying, old and obsolete, when we find in the Acts instances of St. Paul himself spontaneously submitting to rites that can be called nothing

else than ceremonial. We shall derive none the less profit from an humble and earnest study of the Epistle of St. James if we recollect that he was the Bishop of the Jewish Church at the head-quarters of Judaism, writing from thence to Jews who were jealous of the Law, and writing not so much of the doctrine as of the practice of true religion.

The Epistles of *St. Peter* require no particular remark here. The Law is not mentioned in them, though he also wrote for Jews. I may remark perhaps in this place that we certainly might not have discovered from the writings of St. James, St. Peter, or St. Jude, that the believing Jews were not bound by the Law. Even from the Acts it is perfectly plain that the Gentiles were not, and St. Paul explicitly tells us in his Epistles that the Jews were not, any more than the Gentiles, though I suppose that if in things indifferent they chose to regulate their lives according to the Law they had been brought up in, there was no objection to their so doing on the part of Paul any more than of James or Peter or Jude. Perhaps there is nothing wrong in supposing that the teaching of the three latter suited better the degree of growth then attained by the generality of the Jews, than the advanced doctrines of St. Paul, which may have been too strong meat for the great body of the Hebrews in Jerusalem. It may not be wrong to say even with respect to the Twelve, that it was not given to all of them to have the enlarged views of him in whom pre-eminently the saying of Christ was fulfilled that "the last should be first," who,

though born out of due time, became the very chief of the Apostles.

With respect to the first Epistle of *St. John*, I own I found it very difficult to understand from him, the exponent of the simple, the supreme Christian code, the absolute deference to the Law which is apparently exhibited in the third chapter, fourth verse, of our Bible. I say apparently; for as soon as I turned to the original I found that there was really no expression whatever in the verse answering to the English noun, "the Law." To my surprise I did not discover any reference to the code, institution, or books, called by the Jews "the Law." St. John's words very literally rendered are "Whosoever committeth sin committeth also lawlessness (acteth in a lawless manner), for sin is lawlessness." To be perfectly faithful I have so translated it, but I must mention that the Greek words here rendered in our English version "transgresseth the law," are precisely the same verb and noun as are translated in Matt. xiii. 41, "do iniquity," and that the noun occurs exactly twelve times besides in the New Testament, in eleven of which it is rendered "iniquity," in one "unrighteousness." The only reason I can imagine for the truly extraordinary rendering of the expression in 1 John, iii. 4, is that our translators used it for the sake of avoiding the apparent insignificance of such a phrase as "Whosoever committeth sin committeth also iniquity." Yet this is not against the manner of the author of the Epistle, who writes (v. 13), "These things have I written unto you that believe in the name of the Son of God that . . . ye might believe on the name of

the Son of God." However, they might be pardoned if they had left out the definite article, which imparts a sense into the passage that the original can in no wise bear. St. John doubtless meant that no man that had a good Christian hope would deliberately commit sin, because that would not be acting towards God as a good Son to a loving Father, but behaving rebelliously, showing insubordination, and would be throwing contempt on the message or commandment received from God that we should believe on His Son and love one another.

I cannot find that the remaining Epistles of St. John, or the Epistle of St. *Jude*, or the *Apocalypse*, present any occasion for remark on the point we are examining.

I have gone at some length into this subsidiary inquiry because without coming to a clear understanding thereon we might be hampered with the idea that Christians are still under the Law of Moses or part of it, and so are obliged to keep the Sabbath. But I trust the foregoing extracts and remarks may have helped towards making it plain to others, as it is to myself, that we are not placed under the Law of Moses, nor bound by the authority of any part of it. I am aware of no distinction made by the Apostles or enounced in any passage of Scripture between the binding force of one part of the Law and that of another, or the different degrees of permanence between the so-called "Moral Law" and "Cereimonial Law." Altogether and entirely the whole is fulfilled. It is a thing that has passed away, and, as the Apostle says, is "dead."

But even supposing I am wrong in these conclusions,

and we are bound not only by the Mosaic Law, but by an institution which is sometimes considered to have reached back as far as to the days of man's long lost innocence in Paradise, there is a difficulty which must always press upon those who would impose upon us the Law of the Sabbath on such grounds. The fact is *the* Sabbath ordered by Moses is *not* observed, the *Seventh* Day of the week stated to have been sanctified at the Creation is entirely disregarded. But it is not to be wondered at that inconsistencies should go for nothing with those who profess obedience to the Fourth Commandment, and yet in their strange way of attending to it entirely forget a favourite text, that whoever is guilty in one point of the Law is guilty in all—who entirely beyond all their assumed exceptions of “mercy and necessity” engage in acts which the most rigid even amongst them habitually perform on Sunday—who presume to say for themselves “this part of God's Commandment applies to us and that part does not; we have Christian liberty to alter or to leave out some words in God's immutable Law, but not others.” They do seem the most inconsistent of all men, for in practice they set at defiance commands which they say claim our entire subjection. They maintain the plenary and verbal inspiration and supreme authority of Scripture, yet when that tells us that we are not under the Law, they invent a qualification and say that we are *partly* but *not altogether*. They go neither by the Old nor the New Testament, for by the assumed change of a day they entirely ignore the reason given by Moses for

the Sabbath, and they press upon us that which it is too weak a term to say that Christ and his apostles do not enact, for there are more than one or two passages in the New Testament which look quite the other way.

Yet, after all, does not a feeling of dismay almost overwhelm a man anxious for God's glory, and the welfare, temporal as well as eternal, of his fellow-creatures, on first discovering that there is no passage whatever from beginning to end of Scripture which orders or even recommends Sunday observance? He is tempted to think that if this is known the ark must fall, that he must put forth his feeble hand to steady it as God has not stretched forth his Almighty arm in the way he thinks desirable. What will become of us if every Christian is at liberty to regard every day alike? (Rom. xiv. 5-6). What will be the effect if every one knows that as far as Scripture is concerned it is left entirely to individual choice to determine whether one shall observe the Lord's Day or not? the Day on which so many millions of God's people have been turned to Him, and have afterwards received spiritual edification and comfort? a Day on which He has so abundantly honoured the preaching of His word and the administration of the Holy Sacraments? What will become of the religion of the world, what will become of all the happiness that Christianity brings with it, if the bonds of the Sabbath be once loosened, if it cease to be a matter of conscience to observe our Sundays in a religious way? What will become of the preaching of the Gospel and of the spiritual training of the young and the ignorant?

Well convinced that the feelings of many Christians must be very strong on these points, I had (though the subject of the Sabbath was one of the earliest of my Scripture investigations and my mind had been made up about it for a long course of time), till very recently indeed, no intention to include this inquiry amongst the others herewith. But I am more and more convinced that truth in religious concerns ought to be known, and ought never to be concealed. Had the ordering of matters been left to us things might have been very different, but God is wiser than man. And though we cannot know the reasons for all He does, a little reflection may reveal to us some advantages in things as they are.

Man is ever disposed to put restraints on his fellow-man. This habit often rises more from a restrictive scope of vision than from a spirit of tyranny. But whatever may be the cause—be it amiable or selfish—we may be sure that infinitely more evil than good will spring from our determining to make that a sin which God has not. How much mischief has always resulted from misrepresentations of Christianity!

God has decreed, thanks to His Holy Name, that the Gospel shall spread over all the earth; and He will not leave us without the means of carrying on the work even without a compulsory Sabbath, which He has not decreed for us.

To refer again to things as they actually were at first, and actually are now. The Gospel is salvation for all nations, intended for all people. The preaching of

the Sabbath by its first heralds would have been a fatal hindrance to it; the preaching of it by its present ministers is, I fear, a great hindrance to it now. The Sabbath was an institution intimately connected with the Jews' religion. It was ordained by Law when the Israelites had left Egypt and were preparing to enter Canaan, a country which, according to the command of God, they were to have the exclusive possession of. They settled there accordingly as a distinct community, to practise their religion in a state of separation from all other people of the earth. They were not to seek foreign conquests, they were forbidden connection or intercourse with foreigners who did not conform to their very peculiar rites. Even internal trade, if not absolutely prohibited, was greatly discouraged by the laws forbidding the receipt of interest and the retention of anything deposited as security; for under such conditions how can any commerce exist? And if the Israelites had, as they ought to have done, thoroughly conquered Canaan, and otherwise responded to the system divinely communicated to them respecting their national destinies, they would have had full opportunity for observing the ceremonial ordinances of their Law, the Sabbath included, which was a sign between God and them, not between God and other people. That Day would have been to them "a Delight—the Holy of the Lord, Honourable." Then would they "have ridden upon the high places of the land and have been fed with the heritage of Jacob their father." But they failed in all this. Employed only in agriculture

and the tending of their flocks, and secure from foreign foes as long as they kept the covenant of their God and their King, they might, without hindrance and with the greatest profit, have observed their Sabbath. But even *they* did not. The enemy came in, the stranger possessed the land. The first covenant decayed, was made old, and vanished away. And then the regulation, good for the Israelites shut up in their own land and for the few strangers proselytes amongst them, ceased to be enforced; for it could form no part of a religion designed for men of every profession, pursuit, and trade, men of every nation and language under heaven—a religion, in a word, intended to be universal, and which will in time be so throughout the earth.* And herein is shown the wisdom of God, that when in the fulness of time Christianity was instituted, it required nothing that could not be observed by men of every station and every employment. What does

* I do not like to employ a disparaging expression with respect to any part of the Church of England services, but I should certainly be disposed to say that the text Ex. xx. 2, in the Communion Service, was *unjustifiably garbled* if I met with such an instance of mutilation elsewhere. But it really does seem as if the compilers had dreaded lest the people of England should know that the Ten Commandments were given to the Israelites. That they were given to that people in particular, I might almost say exclusively (with the comparatively trifling exception of proselytes), most persons, I am disposed to think, would judge who read the first part of Ex. xx. in the Bible, "And God spake all those words, saying I am the LORD thy God *which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.* Thou shalt have no other gods before me," &c. (see also Deut. v. 6), whereas we all know the Communion Service says only, "God spake these words; and said 'I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have none other gods but me;'" &c., omitting altogether the words I have put in italics.

the New Testament ordain, that master and slave, emperor and subject, male and female, may not all equally well observe? This could not be said of the Sabbath and many other things good only for people of the peculiar polity of the Jews: and that which could not but be broken could not form part of a divinely-revealed *religion for mankind*. Whilst the immense majority in every nation out of Judea were heathens, it was of course impossible for the small minority of Christians, many of them slaves, to keep anything like a weekly Sabbath. Accordingly they are never told to do that, but they are enjoined to "abide in the calling wherein they were called." St. Paul writes to slaves, but we never find him commiserating with them in their forced infractions of any holy day. He writes, also, to their masters, without urging them to allow time for Sabbath observance to their households. Can we fancy certain good men of the present day omitting such a topic under such circumstances? In our happy land there are seldom now obstacles so very insuperable to a religious Sunday observance, and yet in many positions and circumstances of modern life difficulties do exist which were doubtless foreseen by the Allwise and Merciful Lord of all, who, no more now than He did at the commencement of this dispensation, requires what it is not in the power of mankind in general to perform. And to me it is a very sad thing indeed to hear people who do not observe Sunday in a certain rigid manner, so often accused of sinful rebellion against the Law of God. The accusation is one that

works most mischievously, not only in causing much ill-feeling, but in its tendency to demoralise the minds of those against whom it is brought. Individuals, perhaps by no means ill-disposed at first, are represented as heinous sinners, because, as they may have been accustomed to do from early childhood, they walk into the fields or indulge in a little mirth on Sundays. They are called by the opprobrious name of "Sabbath-breakers;" they are shunned by many serious Christians as persons whose character is lost; religion becomes another word with them for gloom and oppression. They are then led to associate with people who have none, and to shake off as far as they are able all reverence for sacred things. Thus they are but too likely to enter the downward path; and when, alas! they come to ruin, they are easily induced by those who take a kind interest in their spiritual state to admit that their evil course began with *Sabbath-breaking*. And even in pious families where a sense of duty, and decency, and good feeling towards those in authority, may avail to check any irregularity, there are numbers of young people who are brought, by the unscriptural strictness of parents and teachers, to hate the sound of the word Sunday, and of religion too in whose name rigid Sabbath observance has been enforced on them in their youthful days. And bonds of filial love and respect are not always strong enough to restrain their disgust. We see too frequently the sons of ministers, and others of the most eminent piety, both in Church and Dissent, become reckless, wild and

depraved. The evil, which is often referred to the inscrutable decrees of the Sovereign Lord of all, may nevertheless be traced to its secondary causes by those who can see any justice in the above considerations. Indeed, very grave responsibility rests on such as lay heavy burdens on others. It would be well for them to consider whether they really join in bearing those burdens themselves. To mention only one or two things. Many of them regularly enjoy comforts on Sunday, or at least on other days, which some of the poor can only obtain, and many more can only have even a slight degree of, on Sundays—the comforts of a well-ventilated mansion, pure country air if they do no more than open their door or window, and fine country views if they do but raise their eye from their good book or their well-supplied table. And most of them will be found to sanction, by their own acts or the acts of their servants, proceedings which are immeasurably more at variance with any Divine Law on the Sabbath, than are the indulgences of harmless sociability, the healthful pleasures of exercise, or the partaking in cheerful companionship of those good things which God has given us richly to enjoy. If they appeal to the Fourth Commandment, they should keep it themselves, and not allow any kind of work to be done by any human being or animal in their establishment. But if the rigidity of this Law may be loosened for them, they should think also of others, and remember how it was intended at first for an agricultural people, who were to labour six days in the pure air of Canaan, and

who might sit down for rest on the seventh to inhale the refreshing breeze under their vine and under their fig-tree. Let those who undoubtedly relax the Law of the Sabbath in their own case without pain to their consciences, remember with merciful considerateness the case of the poor, some of whom work by day and lie down by night in contaminated air, and can obtain no healthful recreation whatever for six days together, and this from week to week, the whole length of their weary lives.

But I have said quite enough, perhaps more than enough, negatively. It is time to ask in conclusion, whether any of us can show a more excellent way? Putting aside every yoke of bondage, standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and determining that we will no more judge any other man in respect of a Sabbath-day than we would in respect of meat or drink, or of the new moon; what shall we, who are to occupy our talents and redeem our time, who are to be careful of the account we shall every one have to give of himself to God, what shall we find profitable for ourselves, how shall each of us best discharge his duty on Sunday? I will begin by saying that every Christian must rejoice that there is one day in seven of at least general, if not quite universal leisure, when he can find more than ordinary opportunity for fortifying his faith by the remembrance of the great, the fundamental fact of his religion, the Resurrection of his Crucified Lord and Saviour. It

must be acknowledged, that with all the aids heavenward which we possess, our occupations, interests and plans connected with this world are so engrossing as to leave us little enough time for attending to concerns of the utmost importance to us—to the things unseen and eternal. We shall find the benefit to be one even for the bodily, as well as spiritual part of our nature, if we make the day an interval in the course of our ordinary pursuits, a complete rest from current worldly business, a break in our usual habits. Without judging others who have a perfect right to take their own view of the matter, let us gratefully hail the opportunity that we have once in every seven days, for more especially seeking the things of Christ ; for self-examination ; for public and private praise and intercession for mankind, our country, our families, and personal friends ; for receiving the Word of God ; for studying the Scriptures ; for attending to the religious education of our children ; for increasing our acquaintance with the history of the Church and the state of its affairs in the present day, and its prospects for the future. Without imposing on people who cannot enjoy it a Sabbath-keeping which must to them be either a mischievous inactivity or an intolerable burden, we may show to the world and to our households on Sundays, by our participation in public observances, and by our private conduct, how we ourselves value the religion of Christ. We may hope and trust, too, that the laws of our country, wisely recognising the benefits I have endeavoured to detail, may protect those who wish con-

scientiously to enjoy them; and without tyrannical interference with the religious habits of individuals, or futile attempts to regulate private morals, may continue to make Sunday, as far as regards matters of state and business, a *dies non*, and allow each Christian all reasonable scope for improving its happy hours in his own way. May our churches, as long as England remains a nation, be thrown open on that day, and may the utmost be done to attract poor and rich, young and old, to the House of God! Let all of us who have received the testimony of Jesus, do our best to provide for the preaching of His everlasting Gospel, and so, in some humble measure, follow the Apostles as witnesses of Christ's Resurrection on the Lord's Day.

But I repeat, this is a matter on which, as not being commanded, there must be liberty to all. Thus there are other days also that personally I like to observe, but as we possess no Scripture orders about them, I will not accuse any one of sin who chooses to take an excursion which prevents his going to Church on Christmas Day or Ascension Day,* or blame one who chooses to fare handsomely on the day fixed for the

* I have heard ministers censure their people for the very scanty attendances in church on Ascension Day. And truly one would think it a day much to be observed, one of the greatest and most glorious days for the Church. Our sacred edifices are crowded on Christmas Day and Good Friday. We keep the days of Our Lord's coming into this world, of His giving up His human life, and of His resuming that life; but the grand and crowning day of His going with our nature up on high, the day when Heaven's everlasting gates were lift up for the entrance of the King of Glory, is passed, as far as the general habits of the people are concerned, without more observance than an ordinary Saint's day gets when the Churches are opened. But, however much to be regretted this may be, it is hardly the fault of the people. Clergymen should not

anniversary of the Lord's death, though I may prefer to keep it as a solemn time, a day on which it is well to abstain from pleasant and unnecessary food. On the other hand, it would not unduly pain me if circumstances called me on occasion entirely to break through my usual course of passing the Sunday, convinced as I am that the observance of it is a matter of preference, privilege and private judgment, not of conscience or morality, not of right and wrong (except when considered with reference to Christian charity for the feelings of weak brethren). Personally I would no more wish to give a railway servant work on Sunday than I would wish to trouble a household servant on that day to provide me with anything more than what may be necessary for comfort and reasonable enjoyment. But others may require to travel on that day in particular, for the sake of breathing good air and procuring beneficial relaxation; or various emergencies may render their doing so desirable or even necessary. Far be it then from me, by doing what God is never said in Scripture to have done—by turning Sunday into a Sabbath—to make their using it for the purposes I have named, a sin to them.

But finally, though I would not shrink from entirely absolving those who see no crime in not regarding the day, I feel sure it is well we should always remember

blame them, but agitate for the recognition of the day by law as a *holiday*, which it is not at present, as Christmas Day and Good Friday are. Bills of exchange have to be honoured on Ascension Day, banks and offices cannot be shut, and so people cannot in general observe it publicly. Neither commerce, nor religion, nor the character of the people would suffer for the enactment of *three* public holidays in the year.

that there is the greatest encouragement for those who with benefit to themselves and charitable feelings towards their neighbours can and do observe it to the Lord. If the Almighty found it so very good for the Israelites to have one day of rest in every seven, we may reason from analogy that in some modified form, as far as our greatly altered circumstances will allow, one day of rest in the week may be very good for us. As, too, Our blessed Lord put honour on the First Day of the week by rising thereon from the dead, and as the early Church found it good to put honour on it likewise in the ways already described, we may find it profitable to follow the example thus set to us. We may well try to rise, for a few hours, beyond this world of labour finished only by death, and think of that happy service which is the occupation of God's blessed ones above, a service of such love and satisfaction as not to interfere with the eternal rest they have there from their labours here. Making an entire change in our thoughts and pursuits, we may also tell our children to put away their ordinary tasks, and may encourage their amiable hilarity, and rejoice with them in the works of God's creation as well as in the wonders of His grace. We may well lay aside our worldly music for a time and substitute some sacred harmony: we need not give way to gloom because we leave the songs of earth, for there are purer anthems of at least equal melody that we may sing. And on every happy Sunday let us try constantly to remember why we delight to keep that Day, "the best of all the seven!"

XIII.

THOUGHTS ON CHURCH ORGAN PLAYING.

OFTEN, when standing up to sing in the midst of a congregation, I have wished that the organist could be by my side in the body of the church whilst a performance exactly like his own was going on at the organ. Not that there has been reason always, or generally, on such occasions to be dissatisfied with the musical talents of the performer. The annoyance has arisen from his failure to employ with sufficient power the more effective tones of the instrument he is playing. Equally with musical talent, good common sense should be a required qualification of the organist of a large parish church. He serves under no conductor. When at his post he is perfect master for the time being, all-powerful to give pleasure or annoyance to hundreds of people. Yet he labours under a great disadvantage. Necessarily close to the instrument, he can hear during the singing scarcely anything but the tones produced from it by himself. And no doubt it happens that many a parish organist, with his head full of musical knowledge, commits the mistake of playing as if he were merely accompanying the practised voices of a

few professionals in a concert-room, instead of leading and supporting the generally untutored singing of a multitude—of high and low, of rich and poor together.

A fine organ is, in my opinion, the grandest of all musical instruments, and a church is its most appropriate place. By the clearness of its upper notes it should *lead* the singing of a congregation, and by the volume and power of its lower tones should supply the *harmony* which can never be expected from the voices of any body of persons untrained by regular musical education or not possessing very extraordinary natural genius. I may also add that the music or psalmody which relieves at intervals the long services of our National Church should be not only *grand* and *solemn* but also *animated* and *cheerful*, and (at the risk of being put down as a barbarian) I would even say rather *loud* occasionally than otherwise. At intervals in the orderly sobriety of our readings and prayers, “a joyful noise” judiciously alternating with solemn sweetness (for the organ is equally capable of both, and I am no advocate for sameness or monotony) brings welcome refreshment to the whole body, mind, and spirit. Yet how many congregations go to great expense in providing fine and large organs, and yet never hear their richer or more powerful tones except when every one, save the performer, is making what haste he can to get out of church and find his way home!

At times, indeed, one has the distinguished happiness of joining in the services at a church where a really sensible musician, who well understands all these

things, is aiding the praises of a large assembly by his performance on an efficient instrument. What gratification can be more animating? The sublime tones of the sweet and powerful organ combine in sustaining and encouraging the voices of the great congregation whilst, in the solemn and cheerful worship of God, they

"Glad homage pay with awful mirth,
And sing before Him songs of praise."

It would be well if some of our organists had a little more of the genial spirit of a certain inspired musician, who, though he could play sweetly and solemnly at appropriate times, gave such royal directions as these for the celebration of the praises of the upright: "Play skilfully, with a loud noise;" "Praise Him with loud cymbals, praise Him with the high-sounding cymbals."

I have attended divine service at many different churches in my life, and have generally found that where the organ was well and cheerfully played, the singing of the congregation was good and cheerful, whether aided by a choir* or not. But I have often had my place in church in the near neighbourhood of persons who sing out of tune, whose voices reach me much more audibly than the notes of the organ do, when its tones fail to come upon the ear with a certain desirable degree of vigour. And then how I have

* A well-managed choir is an excellent thing, yet there may be two disadvantages unless judicious care is taken. A choir may *monopolise* the singing of a congregation rather than *lead* it; and the organist may get into the way of playing to the *choir* instead of to the *congregation*.

wished that the good music of the organ would master the voices of some of the worthy parishioners. On the other hand, there are many persons who possess a good ear, but a *bashful* voice—who cannot sing, especially when coarse voices are near, without a good degree of instrumental support. And besides all this, there is a very disagreeable effect often following a too softly played organ-accompaniment to congregational singing. It happens thus. The human voice, unless thoroughly trained, will always *drop* in pitch to some extent, more or less appreciable, after continuous singing for more than a few moments, if *not well sustained* or kept up to the mark by *instrumental help*, audible and clear. In Church Psalmody the organ and the voices of course *begin* harmoniously in the same key, but when the organ is played so as not to be generally heard, the voices of the congregation are sure soon to fall in pitch a little. The singing, more audible than the accompaniment, ceases a few seconds earlier in each verse of a hymn than the long-sustained final notes of the organ, and when these last are recognised at length, they come to the troubled ear a tone or a semitone higher than the key in which the voices left off. It is not very easy to explain this matter to everybody, and I do not know whether I have succeeded in making my meaning clear. But the effect of the discord is so painful when it comes, and that is not seldom, that I feel persuaded that many besides myself must have noticed it, and must have often sat down for the sermon rather irritated than soothed. The organist of course is unconscious. With

his head close to the instrument, he hears nothing but the sweet, soft tones he himself produces, and perceives not the voice of the people. The remedy would be to play the organ so that all who sing may hear it; they then regulate their voices accordingly, and all ends in tolerable concord.

I am sure that as a rule organists are as worthily entitled to the scanty remuneration they generally obtain as any class of the community are to the fruits of their labour. But I may be allowed perhaps to hint that some of them seem occasionally to forget that there are not many men in the world who can even write such music as Handel's, Mozart's, and Mendelssohn's, yet do they sometimes, in the poverty of their own ideas, inflict for five painful minutes their own extemporaneous compositions on a congregation at the opening of the Church Service. But I ought not, perhaps to have used the word extemporaneous, for usually such original music is much the same, week after week, and one painfully recognises the same vapidness, the same miserable turn, the same depressing cadence dying, resuscitated, and dropping down again, Sunday after Sunday. Such organists as those of whom I speak, amiably imagine, no doubt, that they are pleasing the congregation as much as they are gratifying themselves; but still it is marvellous how they can think that those who are compelled to listen would prefer their flat inanities or spasmodic flights to the truly appropriate and beautiful movements that might be selected in abundance for introduction to Divine Service from the works of the

great masters of sacred music. And nothing could well be easier to get through on the organ than a simple but beautiful "Agnus Dei" from Mozart or Haydn, or the "Holy, Holy, Holy," of Handel.

There is yet another thing that I must notice which few but the very best organists pay any attention to, and that is the importance of judicious selection of the psalm *tunes*—of always choosing a tune of character suited for singing with each particular hymn; and the equal importance of appropriately rendering the various *parts* of the tune; not according to one conventional or unvaried system of "loud" or "soft" but with expression in harmony with the sense of particular lines or passages in the hymn. It is very disturbing to one's equanimity to hear, as I have frequently heard, the most dismal of tunes sung with the animating hymn:

"Come let us join our cheerful songs."

It is mortifying when one is naturally expecting a burst which shall echo again through the church, at the closing words of another hymn:

"And earth repeat the loud Amen,"

to find an impotent organist finishing off in the dullest, tamest way imaginable, though one would fancy he should try to produce a sound as if the mountains and the hills were breaking forth into singing, and all the trees of the field were clapping their hands, and there should be a grand noise amongst the organ pipes as the voice of many waters.

The frequent failure in our Church Psalmody, the want of substance and animation, or I might, perhaps, say the absence of body and spirit in it, do often result from the want of adequately vigorous and judicious development of the noble but manageable and various powers of the organ. But I would not throw all the blame in one quarter. I acknowledge that there is often a good excuse for the organist, who does perhaps as well as he is allowed to do. A great deal of the mischief is due to the arbitrary, I had almost said tyrannical, decisions of some of our Church Architects. They frequently seem to lose sight altogether of the objects for which a place of public worship should be built, and I believe that many of them would like to banish the organ altogether. Happily they have not succeeded in doing that, so it is their fashion to pack away the instrument in the least conspicuous place—to set it down, for instance, in some side corner on the floor. The consequences of this vicious arrangement are obvious. Either the persons who have seats close by the organ must find their voices quite overpowered with the noise, and must be well nigh stunned, or those who sit in the body of the Church beyond a limited distance from the organ will scarcely hear it at all.* These effects are not imaginary, but real; I have frequently heard them complained of. Now if an organ were in its proper place, where it would be really useful

* And besides, there is the fact that an organ on the floor takes up a great deal of room otherwise available for the congregation.

and serviceable, that is in an "organ loft," at one end of the Church, considerably above the heads of the people below, the use of its loudest stops would annoy no one, the open space before it would allow its strains to vibrate in uninterrupted beat through the edifice, and even the gentlest tones of its swell would float throughout the whole interior. It is excessively unfashionable, I know, to talk of an organ-loft now. Architects do not too often make it their business to provide for the musical requirements of a congregation. They have made up their minds that an organ in an elevated position is an unsightly object, which would spoil their design. But an organ need not be an unsightly object in any position; and there is nothing of its size that can be so well or so easily disposed of. The architect himself might plan its form, which might be made in almost any required shape. The ends may be lofty, and the centre low, or an exactly contrary arrangement may be made. Its various pipes and framework may be so dispersed as to make the organ one of the harmonious architectural features of a church, instead of an eyesore and incumbrance. But if any design would be damaged by an organ in its proper place, then that design cannot be a good one for a church, and should be altered; for facilities for the proper and effective conduct of the musical part of Divine Service should scarcely be sacrificed to professional caprice. The matter may seem to some persons not worthy of much consideration, but it is really an important one, for He who is the object of our services has said, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth

Me;”* and there are many with desire to “sing praises unto the Lord,” who find this “sacrifice in His Tabernacle” by no means one “of joy,”† owing to various drawbacks of the nature I have mentioned. Are we certain that our architects of this present age have been successful yet in furnishing a perfectly proper design for a church to hold a large congregation? They copy, at times, the classic proportions of heathen temples, or more frequently now the Gothic constructions of mediæval piety, all excellently adapted to the objects for which they were intended in their time, and so far admirable and beautiful, yet in few respects suited for our own present requirements. The magnificent churches of the Middle Ages, and some more modern ones on the Continent, are wonderfully well designed for affording a hallowed shelter to crowds who assemble in the lofty naves, the aisles and transepts; and for providing a still holier place for the mysterious sacrifices offered many times for the people. From them the thronging multitudes may depart, thinking they are going down to their houses justified if only they have been within the sacred walls whilst their priest has been performing something for their good, or if they had duly gone over by themselves a certain number of repetitions, in the consecrated building, over their beads. The massive column, interrupting sound and sight, matters nothing then. A place behind it, or any corner where the vibrations of a small directing

* Ps. l. 23.

† Ps. xxvii. 6.

bell can reach the ear, is just as good for the soul as where the sound of the unintelligible Latin comes in fuller volume from the sonorous voice of the priest. But such is not the manner after which we English generally worship the God of our fathers. What we require for the purposes of our service is a place in which church-goers can see, and hear, and understand, from every part, both the Clergyman who reads the lessons and the prayers, and the Minister who preaches—a place where all in every part may have facilities instead of hindrances for joining in their service of prayer and praise. And there is no reason why a building suitable for these purposes should not be architecturally fine; for most things that are appropriate to some designed and useful end are beautiful, or may be made so. If a shipwright constructs a vessel to carry her cargo or armament with speed, her lines are sure to be pronounced beautiful; and though beauty was not the primary object of the costly design, the slightest exercise of taste bestowed on the model or the equipment suffices to render the ship, when complete and under sail, as fine a sight as can well be seen. Builders of churches have doubtless shown that their studies of the antique and of the mediæval have not all gone for nothing—that their accomplishments and talents enable them to reproduce a classic fane, a Norman or a Gothic church, of any given period. But space is too often sacrificed, which with more judicious arrangements might be turned to advantageous account for the accommodation of numbers. And light is sometimes designedly shut out

which would be truly acceptable to many old eyes, and good for many depressed spirits. For some architects apparently remember that the early Christians had often no place of securely assembling themselves together for the purposes of worship besides the Catacombs; and they accordingly make their churches nearly as dark and dismal as crypts. There are doubtless a few eminent men who do better things; yet perfectly good churches, where people can see, and hear, and sing together, properly, and worship without discomfort according to the fashion of our own English Service, are not common. But if we could leave anomalies and anachronisms, the talent we possess in these realms would be certainly strong enough for the production of something appropriate and good, original and beautiful. For beauty is in itself a good, or there would not be such exuberant ornament in creation. Let these things be kept in view and insisted on, and men are pretty sure to rise up who will build us churches that shall be both architecturally fine and perfectly suitable for their great object. And that there are many musicians in all respects qualified to take the organ in such buildings, there can be no doubt whatever.

XIV.

THOUGHTS IN CONCLUSION.

AT one of those great periodical meetings in London which are thronged by warm-hearted persons who take delight in having their energies stirred up in a good cause, and who show, by the numbers in which they attend, how large and laudable an interest is felt here in the progress of religion on the earth, a solemn caution was very lately given against the "indulgence of curiosity at the expense of principle."* With the venerable and eloquent Clergyman who "earnestly entreated and affectionately urged" the applauding audience to observe a warning which was doubtless intended to reach far beyond the limits of the building within which it was uttered, every right-minded person will cordially agree to the extent of admitting that an abandonment of principle for the sake of a mere indulgence of curiosity must be a foolish as well as a wicked thing. But although so far there may be no difference of opinion, yet when we come to the application of this apparently simple rule, or have to define the meaning

* See Report of Meetings in *The Record* of 3rd May, 1865.

of the terms "principle" and "curiosity"—the former, of course, in a good sense, and the other in a bad, or at least an indifferent one—then opinions may not unfairly be expected to diverge. And whilst perfectly ready to leave to the reverend and eminent Canon from whose lips the warning came, and to all who agree with him, a full enjoyment of the right to interpret the words in their own way, other men may also claim their right to entertain and even to express their own somewhat different ideas on the point.

Till lately, however, any discussion on such matters would have seemed almost idle. One would have said that the term "principle," as applied to the profession of the Christian religion, was a broad and very obvious thing, as large indeed as Christianity itself. But in these days it pleases some men of note to teach us that in sacred studies the pursuit of investigations which may by possibility tend to weaken certain previously received opinions respecting the meaning or scope of anything found in the English Bible, is an abandonment of "principle," however strongly such opinions may now prove to be opposed to facts and reason. According to their creed, to contend for the faith is to maintain against all comers certain interpretations agreed on in times long passed away by some good men wholly unacquainted with many things perfectly well-known now; and, to hold correct views, is to be resolutely blind to the consequences of many modern discoveries of importance and unquestionable verity.

Of course, I do not mean that all these things were

said by the orator on the occasion I have referred to, but, perhaps, I am scarcely doing him injustice in judging that they are not greatly in disaccord with his sentiments. He did in his speech actually indicate certain "Essays," and allude to some "beautifully written books," with which it was dangerous to "tamper."

With respect to the "Essays," I dare say it will be thought that quite enough has already been said. Very briefly therefore I will state what impression a perusal of them, and of a series of books on the Pentateuch, left on my mind. The discussion of some of the questions which they often very ably treated, is useful and perhaps necessary in the present day; but it was not without great concern that I observed the vagueness in which they left some most important matters, the recklessness they showed in pulling down what has been held sacred, and the heartless indifference they evinced as to what should fill the void or the desolation that they made. Greatly also have I been amazed that persons in the position of some of the writers could have put forth some of the statements that appear in these works.

The term "beautifully written books," I suppose was intended to apply most particularly to a French work which has lately had an immense circulation. Of that, I may say that its perusal has given me a certain kind of satisfaction; or at least, that the pain, caused by an exhibition of the unbelief that pervades

it, is greatly relieved by the discovery that an attack on Christianity, so vaunted and undisguised, should be also so weak. Its statements, I think, can have very little effect on people who possess any intimate acquaintance with the gospel history.*

We may greatly lament the fact that men should have published works of a tendency that we consider erroneous; but it is also to be lamented that some good men, who hate popery with a perfect hatred, should show a readiness to adopt one of its peculiar practices—that some of our clergy should wish to put forth a kind of prohibitory “Index,” and decide for us what we may read and what we may not. Their motive is no doubt good, but such a procedure is strongly opposed to the principles of the Reformation which many amongst them so strenuously uphold. In imaginary dialogues with infidels, one used to see the pertinent question put, “Have you ever read through the Bible?” And on the admission to the contrary, the triumphant rejoinder would always come, “Then you have no right to attack what you know nothing about.” It would be a humiliating thing if the defenders of the truth should be put in the wrong by a similar retort. If we shut our eyes, how can we fight for the life-giving truths preserved till this time in their original purity in the sacred oracles?

Yet I am not indisposed to admit that there has been

* I have made a few remarks on parts of this work in some of the preceding papers.

some excuse for the alarm that has been felt and expressed by many excellent persons whose conviction it is that free inquiry into biblical subjects, and the application to religious matters of the reasoning faculties given us, are not only presumptuous but dangerous things, because almost sure to bring those who meddle with them, either to lose themselves in the blackness of infidel darkness, or to seek refuge and rest from all disquietude in the assumed infallibility of the Church of Rome.

But alarms, though excusable, are often groundless; and it is a weakness to suffer them to hinder the acceptance of that which is really good.

It is a fact now pretty generally recognised, that all great movements which operate in extensively promoting the benefit of mankind, do occasionally bring loss, in a greater or less degree, and sometimes even absolute ruin, to individuals. It seems indeed to be a law in all things connected with human progress, that a few of the weak, however deserving, must suffer when the welfare of the community is aggrandised by something that introduces a large accession of general prosperity. Now at this time, it appears to me to be a certain and a very general advantage to the body of Christians at large, that Religion, sacred history, and the truths on which our faith is based, are not brought before us in the dry, uninteresting way they used to be. But while we enjoy this benefit, we ought not to wonder if a few peculiarly constituted minds are injuriously disturbed by the invigorating discussions of

the present day. The very nature of things would be changed, if it were not so.

And I admit as a notorious fact, that there are before our eyes examples of minds, and amongst them some great ones, too, which have shown a lamentable want of balance, or rather, perhaps, of ballast. What they have been deficient in has been STABILITY—what they seem to have lost sight of has been the advantage of keeping that good thing which they had got; for unhappily, a few part with it altogether, and others give it in exchange for something which is beautiful in appearance, but often proves to be a mere shadow without real substance.

To take the latter case first:—There are men brought up in the Church of England who have admitted that they have had a good thing in the religion that she professes, or rather, perhaps, in the means of grace open to them in her communion. The course of their own self-denying lives has proved how admirable may be the influence exercised by the principles and constitution of their mother-Church. They, themselves, with greater honesty than consistency, admit that there is that to be had within it which is enough to save the soul; and truly that can be in no wise short of something Divine. And out of that, ought they to allow themselves to be seduced on account of some idea which has seized them during a particular course of study, or by means of a saying repeated by a friend, or of something that has occurred which they do not at all admire? Are they reasonable in allowing such things to operate

so as to induce them to sacrifice consistency of character, old friendships, and all pleasing memory of the past, and to disturb the peace of the Church? These things are not to be preferred to truth; but stability and a proper degree of tenacity might have led them to see that they were dropping the good things they had, only to catch at a chimera.

In a highly interesting work offered to certain of "*St. Philip's Sons*," under date of 26th May, 1864, one may read how a good and sincere man, distinguished for great talents and a highly cultivated mind, whilst admitting himself to be possessed of something intrinsically good in his own communion, the Church acknowledged by his nation, became impressed with the consideration that another Church claimed the possession of something he thought worth desiring which his own made no pretensions of having; and one may see how he allowed himself earnestly to long for that which he had not in the state of life to which God had called him. Dreadfully alarmed at what he termed "Rationalism," he could think of no means of checking it but the authoritative veto of intolerance. Superstition had been hateful to his enlightened understanding, and the idea of mental slavery must have been utterly abominated by a mind like his. Yet, eminent, sincere, and self-denying as he was, he seems in his condition of coveting that of which I think the enjoyment can never reasonably be expected, to have suffered himself to be moved by very inadequate causes. By his own published statements we learn that a course of reading he

went through about the Monophysite controversy and the Donatists, shook him very much. Then a friend in his hearing solemnly repeated a striking sentence of four words (quoted in a review) from one of the fathers. When, therefore, he heard that saying he was the more afraid. Lastly one told him that "the wretched Jerusalem Bishopric" was actually constituted! When therefore he heard that saying,* he took an irrevocable step of supreme importance—he left a Church which he admitted possessed Divine grace, for another of richer pretensions, but holding some dogmas and admitting certain practices so apparently startling and corrupt, that nothing but her claim to complete infallibility could induce him to acquiesce in them. It may be a deficiency of faculty for comprehension on my part, but I cannot see how a study of the proceedings of the barbarous and bloodthirsty Donatists, and of the steps taken by their opponents in times of much ignorance, or how the impressive repetition of four Latin words by a man who himself stayed in the Church of England, or how the fact that our Government and our ecclesiastical authorities happened to commit an error of judgment (if error it was) about a bishopric,† could be adequate motives for impelling a man to leave that

* I have with difficulty brought myself to use this phrase in this connection, and by it I intend not the least offence to one who is less time-serving and more unselfish than most men.' But unhappily I can never hear the few words in John xix. 8, and which the Evangelist repeats in verse 13, without thinking of such cases as the one I have been describing.

† Has the Church of Rome never committed any errors about bishoprics?

which had so much intrinsic good, the mother of many eminently Christian sons, a Church in whose bosom he had himself been nurtured in faith and in many a Christian virtue.

And then with respect to the dreaded leading to infidelity—I may ask, why should the circumstance that a new light is thrown on some parts of Scripture cause a man to give up his faith in the Saviour, and his acceptance of the doctrines taught by the Apostles? Why should we suffer ourselves to yield up that good thing that we have, as long as it remains impossible to disprove the principal facts related in the New Testament, and as long as the internal evidence for Christ's religion is found still more satisfactory than the external? Why should we permit anything we hear or observe, to affect our hold in what has proved a really efficacious system, which has borne the test of eighteen centuries—a religion that has the witness of the Spirit? What is there to make us throw away now that which had its beginnings, or at all events its preparations, at the earliest period of man's recorded career, and which may be seen to have been gradually in process of development from the first? For its growing proportions may be traced through the times of the Patriarchs, of the Lawgiver, of the Psalmists, of the Prophets, and of the great Forerunner, till it came to its perfect stature in the days when the Son of Man illustrated His doctrines by His life on earth, and His Apostles, illuminated from on high, declared the

principles of the true faith and taught the precepts of love.

The few remarks in this paper I have been led to add, more as a kind of postscript than anything else; because on thinking of what I have written before, in connection with the warning I have now been noticing, I felt apprehensive that some anxious persons, if any should take the trouble to peruse this little work, might consider me, in the course of two or three of the preceding inquiries, to have been indulging in an unwarrantable "curiosity." I can only trust I am not really amenable to such a censure. For I may truly say that if I had reason to suppose that earnest religious feeling, and the continuance of any one in the Christian faith or in the communion of our National Church, could be placed in the least peril by anything that appears in these pages, nothing whatever should have induced me to publish this book.

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